

EXCLUSIVE Q&A

JONATHAN LEWIS



THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS



Colourful team manager and Mini champion looks back on a varied career p20

■ JANUARY 13 2022 ■ EVERY THURSDAY ■ £3.99 ■ FORMERLY MOTORING NEWS

The legendary McRae and Subaru alliance revived for competitive attack in 2022 **COLIN MCRAE'S NEPHEW MAX GETS SUBARU IMPREZA DRIVE IN AUSTRALIA**



A famous blend:
McRae and Subaru



Max McRae (left) and father Alister (right)

By Graham Lister

Two of rallying's most iconic names will be reunited in 2022 following confirmation of Max McRae's Australian Rally Championship campaign in a Subaru Impreza.

The 17-year-old nephew of the late Colin McRae – who won the 1995 World championship in a Subaru Impreza – is the son of McRae's brother Alister and grandson of Jimmy McRae.

Born and raised in Perth, Western Australia, Max McRae will contest four rounds of the ARC in an Impreza run by Dean Herridge's Maximum Motorsport outfit with support from Subaru Australia.

He will also contest his local championship during what will be his first full season in four-wheel-drive machinery following class-winning exploits at Rally4 level in 2020 and 2021.

Speaking exclusively to MN, five-time British rally champion Jimmy McRae said: "It's good to see the McRae name back with Subaru. Fingers are crossed and we hope he continues the way he's been going so far. It seems to me he can just jump into anything and he's more or less on the pace right away."

McRae Jr added: "I'm beyond excited. Bring on 2022."

Full story, p7

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

RETRO

WHEN FORMULA 1 NEARLY HAD A FALSE START

Looking back on the grand prix drivers' strike in 1982 p16



INSIGHT

WHY BRITISH F4 IS SET TO FLY IN 2022

We outline what's different about the UK junior single-seater contest p26



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Atlas plate style diff, historic spec. with 'Boreham' mods, 18 tooth side gears **£495.80** £594.96

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£395.80 £474.96

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SPARES
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£299.51 £359.41

ESCORT BRAKING PARTS

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Classic Ford wheels from
£69.00 £82.80

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World cup mounts **£28.50** £34.20
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Heavy duty 4-link kit **£185.00** £222.00
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Group 4 spec. front RS struts **£128.00** £153.60
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Mk1 Mexico front wing, LH or RH each **£265.22** £318.27
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www.rallydesign.co.uk



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X-Flow ally radiator **£179.60** £215.52
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M16 Calipers from
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M16 calipers to fit standard discs, pair **£89.00** £106.80
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4.25 ltr FIA plumbed-in fire system, full installation kit, FIA homologation EX 037.13
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Escort Mk1 front heated laminated screen (incl. rubber) **£198.60** £238.32
Escort Mk2 front heated laminated screen (incl. rubber) **£198.60** £238.32
Escort Mk1 front screen rubber **£24.92** £29.90
Escort Mk1 rear screen rubber **£23.92** £28.70
Escort Mk2 front screen rubber **£29.08** £34.90
Escort Mk2 rear screen rubber **£29.08** £34.90
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Bonnet bump stop pair **£6.20** £7.44
Bonnet rail bump stop, set of 4 **£10.90** £13.08
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Wiring loom bulkhead grommet **£6.90** £8.28
Bonnet release cable grommet **£5.20** £6.24
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Throttle pedal pad **£5.20** £6.24
Brake and clutch pedal pads pair **£8.00** £9.60
Shock absorber top caps pair **£13.90** £16.68
Rear bumper side plugs, set of 4 **£9.90** £11.88
Oil line bulkhead grommet **£5.10** £6.12
Brake servo rod bellows **£5.20** £6.24

COMMENT

Photo: Jarrod Sierociak (Page 1), RWilsmore Photography, Motorsport Images, Jakob Ebrey, Volland Racing, mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Sport for all: The 750 Motor Club's BMW 116 Trophy is another resounding success

BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS

To the outsider, the perception of barriers to taking an active interest in motorsport are that they are many and insurmountable. In Motorsport News this week, we highlight two instances where this is very much not the case.

There are many avenues into motorsport, be that racing or rallying, that are positively slanted towards the inexperienced or underfunded. We turn the spotlight on the BTRDA's drive to embrace Targa road rallies and it is one which is underpinned with both a solid and proven ethos and a genuine desire from those behind-the-scenes to throw the motorsport doors as wide open as possible.

The community spirit prevails to spread the gospel of competition and Nick Garton's feature can be found on pages 14-15.

One of the hardy perennials of opening the doors to cut-price competition is the 750 Motor Club, which has once again struck gold with its 116 Trophy for the rear-wheel-drive German machines. Graham Keillor takes a look at the thriving series on pages 29-30.

Also in this issue, our columnist-at-large David Addison takes a look back to the beginning of the 1982 Formula 1 season, which got off to a faltering start with the grand prix grid holed up in a hotel and, effectively, on strike. It is a fascinating tale and one that includes instructions on how to disassemble an AK-47 assault rifle. Who knew that grand prix drivers were so talented?

The subject of our readers' Q&A is a man who has touched the careers of so many young drivers as a team manager and man who is a formidable racer in his own right. If a doctor took a blood sample from Jonathan Lewis and it returned a result of 100% Duckhams, we wouldn't be surprised. Lewis is old school, honest and isn't afraid to bob and weave to get what he wants. Read his fascinating interview from page 20.

Keillor also gives us the lowdown on the new-look Formula 4 package for next season. This is a staging post for single-seater racing in 2022 in the UK. Formula 4, allied to the successful GB3 and cut-price GB4 categories, mean that aspiring F1 drivers in the UK have never had more options. The UK, almost by default, is recreating the single-seater ladder that existed a bunch of decades ago. That isn't a bad thing because it keeps the exciting new talent on these shores for a few more seasons before they go off to seek fame and fortune elsewhere.

The rejuvenation of Formula 4 and the continued rise of GB3 are things that should make the UK fan very happy indeed.

Enjoy this week's issue.

Matt James

Editor, Motorsport News
matt.james@kelsey.co.uk



MOTORSPORT NEWS

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for Formula 4
in the UK

We lift the lid on how 2022 changes will
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Behind the wheel of a rallycross title winner

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RACING NEWS



Briton Hamilton was angered by finale



Photos: Motorsport Images

Ben Sulayem says he has had no contact from Lewis Hamilton

FIA HEAD THINKS LEWIS WILL RETURN FOR GRAND PRIX TITLE ATTACK IN 2022

Ben Sulayem says he fully expects downtrodden Lewis Hamilton will join the grid for new-era F1 this year

By Matt James

New FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem is confident that Lewis Hamilton will not turn his back on Formula 1 despite the controversial end to the 2021 World championship battle.

Hamilton has remained tight-lipped on his future after losing the crown to Red Bull's Max Verstappen in Abu Dhabi in December. Question marks were raised over the implementation of a late-race safety car and both Hamilton and his bosses at Mercedes felt the final outcome had been "manipulated" as some cars

were allowed to unlap themselves from the safety car while others weren't.

Rumours have suggested that the seven-time title-winner Hamilton would walk away from grand prix racing as a mark of his disappointment at the way the season finale had been handled.

Speaking on the Dakar Rally recently,

FIA boss Ben Sulayem said: "No, I don't think he will [quit]."

"I'll ask your question: did Lewis declare that he's not going to race? No. Exactly. Being a driver, you declare yourself, you don't let the rumours [talk]."

"I'm confident that Lewis [will return]. Lewis is a big part of motorsport, and of

Formula 1, the new era [can add to] Lewis's wins and achievements, and also Verstappen is there. I am confident that you will see a challenging F1 season next year."

Ben Sulayem added that while the FIA had sent communications to Hamilton since the end of the 2021 campaign, there had been no response from the Briton.



Major works are taking place to improve run-off at parts of Spa track

REPROFILED RUN-OFF AREAS FOR SPA FLASHPOINTS

Bosses of the Spa-Francorchamps track are pressing ahead with several modifications to the run-off on sections of the Belgian venue.

The most significant works have taken place around the Eau Rouge section of the circuit, which has been the scene of a number of recent high-speed accidents. The track layout will remain unchanged.

The Raidillon chalet on the outside of the circuit was demolished last year to make room for a covered grandstand with 4,600 seats as well as VIP boxes. It is due to be finished by April.

Alongside works around Eau Rouge, barriers have been moved back at Les Combes and there is a new gravel trap at La Source. Further reprofiling has taken place at the fast right-hander of Blanchimont towards the end of the lap. It will have an enlarged run off area and gravel trap, along with a service road.

As well as a reaction to recent accidents at the track – including Anthoine Hubert's fatal Formula 2 crash in 2019 – the alterations have been made as track bosses aim to secure a licence for top-level motorcycle racing.



Szafnauer has left Aston

ASTON PRESSES ON WITH PROGRESS AS SZAFNAUER LEAVES

The Aston Martin F1 team says it will not be affected by the departure of team principal Otmar Szafnauer at the start of the new year.

The 57-year-old, who joined the Silverstone-based team when it was branded as Force India in 2009, had been tipped with a move to the rival Alpine squad over the latter part of last season, but he has yet to confirm a new role.

A statement from Aston Martin F1 said: "Otmar Szafnauer has left the company and his role will be managed within the leadership team until a replacement is appointed."

"We would like to thank him for the service provided to the team over the past 12 years and wish him well for the future as he will undoubtedly take on new challenges. Fortunately, we are led and managed by a strong group of individuals, and we are comfortable to take a little time to explore options before announcing a new team structure."

"The focus of the team is currently on preparing the most competitive car possible for the start of the 2022 season."

RUSSELL: EARLY 2022 SPEED WILL BE NO GUIDE

New Mercedes F1 recruit George Russell says early test and race pace from teams up and down the grand prix grid in 2022 will not necessarily point to who has title-winning potential.

A radical design switch this season could lead to a significant shake-up in the usual pecking order as squads get to grips with the revamped machines, which will feature less downforce in a bid to improve overtaking.

Russell told Autosport: "I am sure it won't necessarily be who is quickest at race one will win, and I am sure there will be some interesting designs out there and might be some underdogs who

prevail in the opening tests or races.

"It is whoever develops the fastest, whoever develops the best and to build those foundations for the coming years. That is a side I am really excited for from an engineering perspective."

Russell added that working alongside his new team-mate Lewis Hamilton should help the Mercedes duo hit the front quickly. "Obviously teaming up with Lewis is incredibly exciting. I am in a privileged position to be in to go alongside the best ever," added Russell. "It is an amazing opportunity to again progress myself as a driver and see how I fare."



George Russell thinks that early form will be hard to predict in F1

OBITUARY

Kevin Kalkhoven 1944-2022

Former Champ Car series boss and IndyCar team owner Kevin Kalkhoven passed away last week at the age of 77.

The Australian, a venture capitalist, took over Champ Cars in 2003 with Gerry Forsythe and helped revive the US single-seater series amid a division between top-line

racing in America and kept the category afloat.

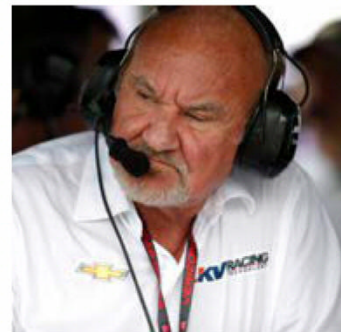
As well as forming KV Racing with Jacques Villeneuve's former manager Craig Pollock – a team that, after several alterations in ownership, claimed glory in the Indy 500 in 2013 with Tony Kanaan driving – Kalkhoven also bought Cosworth and

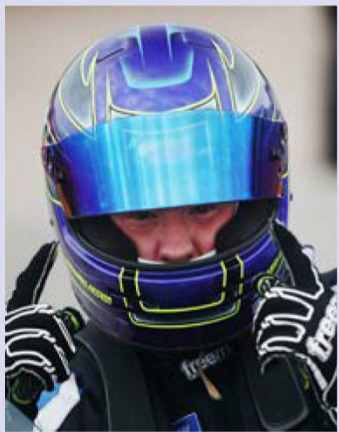
Pi Research in 2004 and was chairman of the board up until last season.

Indianapolis Motor Speedway owner Roger Penske said: "Motorsports has lost one of its true leaders. Kevin Kalkhoven had a great passion for open-wheel racing, and his vision and support helped guide the sport

through some turbulent times."

Hal Reisiger, CEO and chairman of Cosworth, said: "Since [Kevin's] involvement with Cosworth in 2004, he had been a key source of inspiration for the business. His passion for motorsport is well documented, but he was also a visionary and pioneer of future technology."





Aspin in with Parker

ASPIN CONFIRMS TEAM PARKER DRIVE FOR '22

Teenager Will Aspin will compete with multiple title-winning Team Parker Racing for his freshman campaign in Porsche Carrera Cup GB this season.

Aspin, after finishing third in 2021's Ginetta GT5 Challenge standings, confirmed to Motorsport News late last year he will graduate to compete in Carrera Cup GB in 2022 and '23.

The Florence-born 17-year-old has already sampled Carrera Cup GB's new 992 car at Silverstone, and this season will compete in Carrera Cup's Pro-Am championship. He has told MN he intends to move from Pro-Am to the frontrunning Pro contest for 2023.

Team Parker meanwhile has secured 14 Carrera Cup titles in the past five years.

Aspin said: "I don't want to take it easy this season. I've got the mentality that I'm not just here to learn – I'm here to make a point and I'm here to do well, because I want to win and enjoy a career in motorsport."

TURNER AND TOPHAM RETURN WITH 2022 BRITISH GT TITLE AIM

Three-time Le Mans winner Turner will have a full British GT season in 2022 in Newbridge Aston Martin

Photo: Jakob Ebrey



Topham (l) and Turner will aim for GT4 title

By Graham Keilloh

Darren Turner will rekindle his British GT Pro-Am title-winning partnership with Matt Topham in a Newbridge Motorsport GT4 Aston Martin this year and they are aiming for the overall crown.

Three-time Le Mans winner Turner with Topham took last year's GT4 Pro-Am championship in a Newbridge Vantage, plus finished fourth in the overall standings despite missing Brands Hatch's season opener and scoring in only five of their eight races. The pair won together first time out at Silverstone in June then triumphed again at Oulton Park.

Turner missed two British GT rounds last year, but for 2022 has a confirmed full-season programme. Topham and Turner are therefore likely to start the season among the

overall GT4 title favourites, and if they bag that crown they will become the first Pro-Am duo to win it since 2016.

Topham said: "Racing in British GT had been a dream of mine and 2021 didn't disappoint – I was surprised how well Darren and I worked as a team last year and the results we achieved, including winning on our debut. Now, with experience and results, the expectation and pressure ratchets up a few notches. I believe we have the pace to beat the silver crews over a season but that relies on us maximising every weekend."

Turner added: "It was a nice surprise to win the Pro-Am championship last year considering Matt's experience but he had an incredible year and the team delivered a winning car. So now let's see what we can do in 2022."



Pair will handle a Vantage

OVENDEN AND WIGGIN SEEK MINI TROPHY TITLE

Tom Ovenden and Joe Wiggin are both aiming for the Mini Challenge Trophy title this year after re-signing with Excelr8 Motorsport and PerformanceTek respectively.

Multiple junior rallycross champion Ovenden, 17, made his first foray into circuit racing last year in the Trophy with Excelr8. He showed strong improvement during his freshman season and in the Silverstone finale got three

podium finishes from three starts, including a win in the final race where he prevailed in a frenzied multi-car battle.

Wiggin meanwhile joined the Trophy grid last season as reigning British Racing and Sports Car Club Mazda MX-5 champion, and he switched to PerformanceTek for round three at Brands Hatch, where he won the second race. Wiggin added a further victory later in the campaign at Croft, making

him one of only four drivers to secure multiple wins.

Hungarian racer Gergo Racz will become one of the youngest drivers in Mini Challenge history after joining Excelr8's assault on 2022's JCW contest. Racz, who turns 16 in March, will maintain links with the M1RA team co-founded by World Touring Car Cup ace Norbert Michelisz, with which Racz took fourth in the Swift Cup Europe 1.4-litre junior class standings last year.



Rallycross convert will aim for glory in the Mini Challenge



The BRSCC will offer a more compact Mazda MX-5 contest for the 2022 season

MAZDA SUPERCUP ADDS BUDGET SPRINT VERSION

The British Racing and Sports Car Club has added an all-new lower-cost sprint Mazda MX-5 Supercup Clubman championship to its MX-5 Supercup programme for the 2022 season.

The Supercup Clubman championship offers Mk3 competitors a shorter format of a 15-minute qualifying session followed by a pair of 15-minute

races, normally held over a single day.

The Mazda MX-5 Supercup championship for Mk3 cars meanwhile continues with its 20-minute qualifying session followed by three 20-minute races, normally spread over two days. The two Supercup championships will take place at the same circuits and events.

BRSCC chief operating officer Paul McErlean said: "It became clear to us that some of our members would prefer to be provided with an option to continue racing their cars in an unchanged technical spec, but with less of a commitment in terms of days away from home, entry fees, car wear and tear and general costs."

BARNICOAT SPEARHEADS GULF 12 HOUR WIN FOR MERCEDES

A dominant display by Ben Barnicoat, Martin Kodric and Isa Al Khalifa in their 2 Seas Motorsport Mercedes-AMG GT3 gave them honours in the Yas Marina-based Gulf 12 Hours last weekend.

The crew, winners of the equivalent race in Bahrain 12 months ago, drove a faultless event made up of two six-hour

parts. Kodric lost time at the end of the opening part with a deflating tyre and Barnicoat needed an emergency pitstop in part two to check a trackrod but there was no stopping the car as it crushed the opposition.

The sister car of Ian Loggie, joined by Morgan Tilbrook and hugely impressive GT3 rookie Casper Stevenson, was

after a Pro-Am win but challenged for the lead in the opening part. Loggie lost ground at the start of part two and then the car was forced to pit when a bolt from a skidblock worked loose under the car. Although its pace wasn't affected, the team brought in Tilbrook early and effected repairs, dropping the car out

of the top-three positions.

That allowed the Mercedes of Valentin Pierburg/Dominic Baumann/Christoph Lenz up to second and Pro-Am victory, with the VR46 Ferrari 488 of Moto GP racer Luca Marini, Alessio Salucci and the Valentino Rossi-replacing David Fumanelli taking third.



The 2 Seas Motorsport Mercedes-Benz came out on top

RACING NEWS



Bearman: eyes on FIA F3

BRIT BEARMAN SEALS FIA F3 CHAMPION PREMA DRIVE

British rising star Ollie Bearman will race in the Formula 1-supporting FIA Formula 3 championship this season with frontrunner Prema Racing.

Bearman last year claimed both the German and Italian Formula 4 championships with Van Amersfoort Racing with a combined 17 wins and 26 podiums, becoming the first to take the two crowns in the same year, as well as impressed in GB3 championship guest appearances.

The 16-year-old late last year was confirmed as having been snapped up by the Ferrari Driver Academy and Bearman also won Motorsport News's rising star of the year accolade.

He now in 2022 has a FIA F3 drive with Prema, whose drivers have won that championship in each of the three seasons since it rebranded from GP3 for 2019. Before that Prema won six out of seven drivers' titles in FIA F3's part-predecessor FIA Formula 3 European championship.

Bearman has already sampled a Prema FIA F3 car in the championship's post-season test at Valencia last November.

Bearman said: "We [him and Prema] worked really well together in the post-season test, and their results in previous years across everything which they do, speaks for itself. I can't wait to get started in Bahrain."

SUPER CLASSIC CLASS BREAKDOWN CONFIRMED

The newly revamped Super Classic Pre '99 Formula Ford championship has confirmed its class structure for its inaugural season this year.

These four classes, all for Kent-engined Formula Ford chassis, match the Super Classic class breakdown in the championship's predecessor Northern and Super Classic Formula Ford 1600 championship.

THE CLASSES

- Super Classic A** cars built from 1990 to 1998
- Super Classic B** cars built from 1982 to 1989
- Super Classic C** cars built from 1972 to 1981
- Super Classic D** cars built from 1967 to 1971

The British Racing and Sports Car Club contest, which from 2022 is for pre-1999 cars only, will have its opening meeting at Oulton Park in early April.



Rees and JHR boss Steven Hunter stay together in 2022



Rees and JHR took F4 sweep

BRITISH F4 CHAMPION REES GETS GB3 STEP-UP WITH JHR

The 16-year-old reigning champion from Wales is looking to benefit from continuity as he steps up a level

By Graham Keilloh

Reigning British Formula 4 champion Matthew Rees will graduate to the GB3 championship this season remaining with the JHR Developments team.

The 16-year-old Welsh racer on his car racing debut last season

claimed British F4's title with JHR, bagging four wins in total and a further six podiums, as well as topping the season's first three qualifying sessions. Rees sealed the title with a race to spare.

He also therein helped JHR to its first British F4 teams' title as well as to an unprecedented drivers', teams' and rookies' title treble.

JHR intends to field three of the upgraded-for-2022 GB3 cars in the championship this year having last raced in GB3's predecessor BRDC British Formula 3 contest in 2020.

Rees said: "They [JHR] understand me and my requirements when giving me a car to go and race and, whilst I

have been flattered by all the attention from other teams, I believe that JHR has the capability and desire to repeat our success from last year.

"I'm looking forward to being back with JHR, rather going to a different team where you'd have to get settled in, learn how the team operates, and those sorts of things.

If everything goes to plan, hopefully we'll have similar success stories to those we had last year."

JHR boss Steven Hunter added: "After a great F4 British campaign last year we are pushing to emulate the success in GB3 and, with some hard work on all sides, I can't see why this can't be achieved."

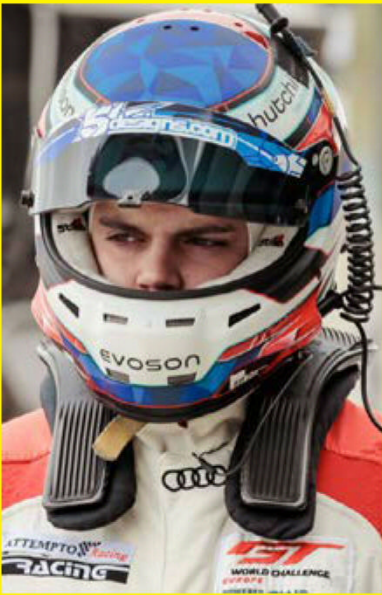
YOUNGSTER HUTCHISON GETS ALMS CHANCE

Scottish GT racer Finlay Hutchison will make his debut in the Asian Le Mans Series next month with a return to Attempto Racing.

For 2022's ALMS, made up of Dubai and Yas Marina double-header races on back-to-back weekends in mid-February, Hutchison will team with Alex Aka and a to-be-confirmed driver racing the latest-generation Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II.

The 21-year-old Dundee driver will also with Attempto make his latest Dubai 24 Hours appearance this weekend, partnering Aka and Florian Scholze in the earlier-generation EVO.

Hutchison said: "Alex and I have a lot of experience of the Audi R8 and I was one of the first to race the new EVO II car, so hopefully that will pay dividends for the ALMS and we'll be able to hit the ground running."



Hutchison: ALMS debut

GILKES SIGNS FOR GB3

Double F1600 champion Nick Gilkes will make his GB3 championship debut this year after being confirmed as Hillspeed's first signing for 2022.

The 16-year-old British-Canadian, who became the youngest-ever Ontario F1600 champion last year on top of winning the Canadian F1600 crown, will graduate to slicks-and-wings racing and tested a Hillspeed GB3 car at Silverstone last November.

Alongside W Series racer sister Megan, Gilkes also competed in last year's Formula Ford Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy.



Gilkes signs with Hillspeed

Hillspeed team principal Richard Ollerenshaw said: "He's a great young driver with a lot of potential. Hillspeed has a long history of working with and developing overseas drivers."

PHOTO CAPTION COMPETITION



"Do you think Matt James could pull some strings for us?"

Thanks very much for your entries. In a competitive field, the winner is this close-to-home effort from Bob Milloy. Congratulations Bob!

CARTOON CAPTION COMPETITION



"Sir, sir, you can stop writing now, I've found the original."

Thanks very much for all the entries. Congratulations Ian Stead, the original cartoon with your caption is on its way to you. Happy New Year!

RALLY NEWS

McRAE JR TO FOLLOW DREAMS WITH AUSTRALIAN RALLY CAMPAIGN

Alister's son lands Subaru deal for 2022 Australian national outings

Photos: Jarrod Sierociak, FIAERC.com, mcklein-imagedatabase.com



McRae will link up for Subaru in 2022

By Graham Lister

Jimmy McRae has tipped his grandson Max McRae for big things after the 17-year-old landed an Australian Rally Championship campaign in a Subaru Impreza.

The deal for McRae Jr, son of Colin McRae's brother Alister, to drive a Maxmium Motorsport Impreza on four ARC rounds alongside a Western Australia championship bid in 2022 revives one of rallying's most iconic partnerships.

Max McRae's uncle became WRC champion in a Subaru Impreza and the late rallying legend and the Japanese make have remained intrinsically linked ever since, despite the Scot's last appearance in a Subaru at World championship level coming on Rally GB in 1998.

Speaking exclusively to Motorsport News, Jimmy McRae said: "I've seen Max's progress through his karting and sat beside him when I think he was 13 years old, in a Lancer E6 or E7. We had a play with that and I thought: 'bloody hell, this young boy's going to be good'. I was very proud and I thought: 'here's a guy with



Max McRae and father Alister (r)

bloody cushions behind him and underneath him and he's chucking this Evo around like he's been doing it for years.'

"I sat beside him in a Porsche historic car, they're not the easiest things to drive and he was absolutely tail-out, long corners, and controlled it. Then I jumped in after and thought I'd try to do the same but, no, I spun it!

"He was so good in the karting and in the racing he's done that I said 'maybe you should concentrate on Tarmac rather than the rallying' but his heart's set on rallying."

Of Max McRae's Subaru Australia deal, Jimmy McRae said: "It's great [they] are interested, it's good to see the McRae name back with Subaru. Fingers are crossed and we hope he continues the way he's been going so far, and it just seems to me he can just jump into anything and he's more or less on the pace right away."

Additional reporting Nick Garton

INGRAM RELISHING MONTE CARLO OUTING FOR TOKSPORT

Chris Ingram says it will be a "dream" to make his debut on the Monte Carlo Rally.

The Briton is one of 18 drivers entered in the WRC2 division on the 2022 World championship opener from January 20-23.

He will drive a Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo for Toksport WRT, which also includes Nikolay Gryazin and Andreas Mikkelsen in its line-up. Ingram's fellow Briton Ross Whittock will co-drive.

"It's a dream to compete on the most

prestigious and challenging rally," said Ingram, 27. "It will be an unbelievable experience [as we] fight for the WRC2 Junior title."

Monte Carlo Rally organisers were due to publish the entry list last week having whittled down more than 100 applications to meet the 75-car maximum limit.

Eleven Rally1 cars are due to take part, three from Hyundai, four from M-Sport and four from Toyota, including a Yaris for Brits Elfyn Evans and Scott Martin.



Ingram says it is a dream come true to tackle the Monte Carlo Rally



This year's Liepaja Rally, set for July, will be renamed as Rally Latvia

GOVERNMENT FUNDS FOR LATVIA'S WRC BID

Latvia has re-entered the race to land a World Rally Championship round in the future.

The country, part of the European championship roster since 2013 through Rally Liepaja, came close to joining the Covid-hit 2020 calendar with a combined WRC and ERC event only for talks to falter when ex-Hyundai team boss Andrea Adamo vetoed the plan.

However, ex-rally driver Raimond Stokss, whose RA Events company promotes Rally Liepaja and Latvia's World Rallycross Championship round in Riga, has secured Latvian government funding for a 2024 bid.

"It starts now, the road to the WRC,"

Stokss said. "The last few weeks have been full of very intense work, but it is gratifying that the time and work invested has resulted in such a decision. The cabinet of ministers have supported the WRC Latvia 2024 plan and thank you very much to everyone who has helped to make this decision positive, to the Government of Latvia, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Finance."

Rally Liepaja, which is set to host round five of the ERC season from July 1-3 on high-speed gravel stages in western Latvia, is set to be renamed Rally Latvia to reflect increased government interest.

FAMIN STEPS IN TO HEAD FIA RALLY DEPARTMENT

Ex-Peugeot Sport boss Bruno Famin has taken temporary charge of the FIA rally department following Yves Matton's departure prior to Christmas.

Matton quit the director role he'd held since 2018 with a move to Hyundai widely expected.

Famin, the FIA deputy secretary general for sport, will take over from Matton until a permanent successor is found.

In another notable personnel move, Chris Williams has replaced Christian Loriaux as M-Sport's technical director. Previously M-Sport's head of engineering, Williams was behind the Fiesta WRC, Fiesta R5 and Puma Rally1 projects having started out by heading up the Fiesta ST project in 2005.

WRAPS COME OFF 2022 WRC ON A LIVESTREAM

Fans will be able to watch the 2022 World Rally Championship season launch on Saturday evening.

Streamed live from Red Bull's Hangar-7 near Salzburg in Austria on WRC+, Facebook and YouTube, the event will feature appearances by all factory Rally1 drivers and is set to provide the first opportunity for fans to see the new-for-2022 car liveries, which will be unveiled during the broadcast.

New FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem will attend, while representatives from the Hyundai, M-Sport and Toyota teams will take part.

The event is due to begin at 1700hrs (1800hrs CET) with Julian Porter among the hosts.

MIKKELSEN'S LATE CALL-UP ENDS EARLY

European and WRC2 champion Andreas Mikkelsen has had a busy start to the year.

The 32-year-old began 2022 by recruiting co-driver Torstein Eriksen, the 2021 WRC2 champion navigator, from his fellow Norwegian and rival Mads Ostberg, who said the move was a "surprise" in a statement.

Mikkelsen was then two stages into his Dakar debut when he was forced to retire

due to damage sustained in a roll.

He had received a late call-up to replace Mitch Guthrie Jr in the Red Bull Off-Road Junior Team on the Saudi-based event alongside long-term co-driver Ola Floene, who quit co-driving for Mikkelsen last summer to make a full-time switch to cross-country events.

Ostberg, meanwhile, has named Swede Patrik Barth as Eriksen's replacement.



Mikkelsen was ruled out of Dakar Rally

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The Brazilian is peerless for his final drivers' championship win in Formula 1



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Rotary glory for the Japanese underdog



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Penske man takes his final Indy 500 glory



THE McRAE STAR STARTS TO EMERGE
When Colin conquered British rallying

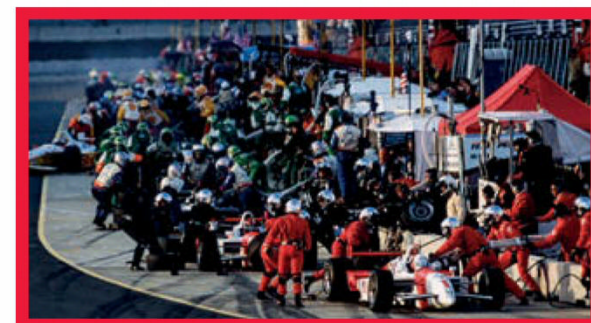
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The Briton's greatest career triumph recalled

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RALLY NEWS

ALL-FEMALE CREW WINS HEART OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIP

Lunicorn pairing scoop coveted Midland crown in their first season of competitive rallying

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Martin Walsh



Wigley and Cooper took title in their first season

By Ian Harden

Rallying rookies Lucy Wigley and co-driver Emma Cooper have won the Association of West Midland Motor Clubs' Heart of England Championship in their first season of competition.

The Renault Clio pairing clinched the title at the Dukeries Rally in December, beating season-long rivals Lucy and Samantha Pitch (Rover 214) and Matt and Adrian Walk (Ford Fiesta).

Competing under the Lunicorn Motorsport banner, the 2021 season marked the culmination of a long-held ambition to take part in rallying for both Wigley and Cooper.

Both crew members have previously enjoyed different forms of performance driving as a hobby.

Wrigley said: "Call it a mid-life crisis, or call it finally fulfilling a long-standing dream, both are equally applicable

"We entered the championship simply to give us a framework of events to focus on in our first year. At the start we had no expectations, but as the season progressed we became more competitive.

"Finishing our first season as overall winners, first in class and top female crew we feel is an amazing achievement and is particularly pleasing as we have made so many new friends since starting rallying."

The pair plans to defend the title in 2022 and are currently contesting the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship to gain further experience. After three rounds, they are second in the two-litre class.

McNULTY READIES FOR RETURN

Returning Irish rally ace Tim McNulty reported a positive test session with McGeehan Motorsport last month after declaring his return to the Irish Tarmac and National Championships that he won in 2011.

He said: "It's shaping up to be a busy year. I have spent some time in the car... it's nimble and quick and we are making some big steps forward with the set-up so as things stand, I'm pleased about it all and feeling confident, too."

The veteran's new Fiesta has been converted from left-hand drive to right-hand drive, in preparation for the season. As a result, he will be eligible to score overall ITRC points, but not

in either the series' International or National categories.

"I'm going back to enjoy it but there is still a competitive edge there, too," McNulty added. "If we finish 15th in [Irish season-opener] Galway then that's fine – we can build on that. We have the experience to sit down afterwards and look at where we are strong and where we're weak and make the right changes."

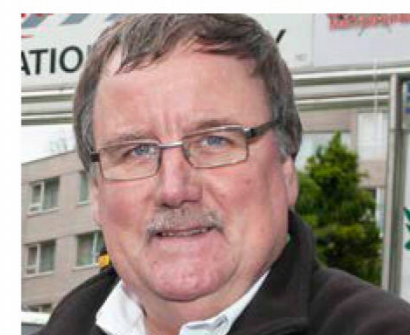
The team will not run the latest round of upgrades devised by M-Sport, which include new software and a revised bonnet design. "Right now, there's no point having them but if we need them, we will get them," McNulty said.



McNulty will return to ITRC in Ford Fiesta

OBITUARY

Don Wilmont



Tributes paid to Wilmont

Rally organisers, officials and competitors are mourning the loss of well-known co-driver and rally administrator Don Wilmont, who passed away on New Year's Eve following a very brief illness.

As a competitor, Wilmont rallied from the 1970s until 1999 as co-driver alongside talents such as Tony Pond, Kenny McKinstry as well as Paul Harris with whom he won the Donegal Harvest Rally in 1998.

A key member of the Northern Ireland Tourism industry, Don was one of the founding members of the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance. In 1999 he took up the role of manager of the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship, presiding until 2012 and earning generous tributes from drivers of the era.

"Don was a gentleman in every way," said Eugene Donnelly, whose five ITRC crowns came between 2004 and 2009.

"He was a great support to me personally. When we had the controversial incident on the Cork '20' Rally at the end of the 2004 season, he put his heart and soul into supporting me in getting to the bottom of what happened. With his help I returned in 2005 – because I nearly didn't."

MN extends its condolences to his family and many friends.

MOFFETT IN: MOFFETT OUT BROTHERS CHANGE ROLES

British Rally Championship frontrunner Sam Moffett has elected to step back from competition in 2022, preferring to focus on his business interests after a roller coaster season last term.

A Irish Tarmac, Narional and Forest rally champion Moffett won the 2021 BRC curtain-raiser, the Neil Howard Stages, in a Ford Fiesta Rally2. He claimed a second overall win for the year when Irish rallying restarted at the Kerry Winter Rally driving brother Josh's Hyundai i20 R5 last November.

After finishing sixth on his final event of 2021, the Ulster Rally, in a Ford Fiesta R5, Moffett has now decided to place his priorities elsewhere, telling Motorsport News: "I don't even have a car at the minute, I just couldn't be bothered. I might do the odd event."

As one of the Moffett siblings steps back, however, another member of the rally family has appeared in the form of younger brother Tommy, who participated in the Boggeragh Rallysprint over the Christmas period

Competing under the Motorsport Ireland banner in a Toyota Aygo, with

older brother Sam switching over to the co-driver's seat, the younger Moffett was heading for victory in the J1000 category until the dying stages of the event.

Moffett built a seven-second lead but lost almost a minute with an off road excursion on the penultimate run, resulting with a third in class finish.



Tommy Moffett has entered fray



Return of full Irish season includes Josh Moffett's Hyundai i20 R5

BUMPER ENTRY FOR GALWAY

Organisers of the Galway International Rally have already received more than 150 entries for the opening round of the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship on February 5-6.

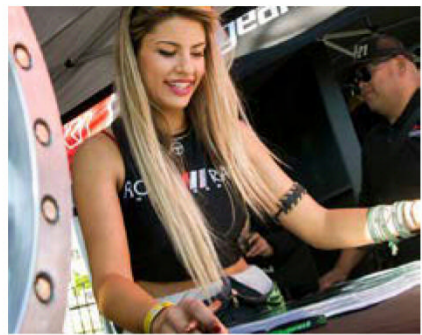
Confirmed entries include Callum Devine (Ford Fiesta Rally2), Josh Moffett (Hyundai i20 R5), Meirion Evans (VW Polo GTi), Cathan McCourt, Aidan Wray, Stuart Biggerstaff and David Guest in various versions of Ford Fiestas.

Daniel Cronin, younger brother of four-time British Rally champion Keith, has also placed an entry despite selling

the Fiesta R5 that he has campaigned over the last four seasons. The Ballylickey driver is currently considering his options to replace the car, including a VW Polo GTi and a Ford Fiesta Rally2. Another entrant who has yet to finalise his mount is former Tarmac and National champion Declan Boyle.

Entries for the National section in Galway include Kevin Eves (Toyota Corolla), Declan Gallagher (Toyota Starlet) and the Ford Escorts of Daniel McKenna, Chris Armstrong, Marty Toner, Gary Kiernan and Damien Toner.

RALLY NEWS



Christine GZ joins Veloce

CHADWICK QUILTS VELOCE XE

W Series champion Jamie Chadwick will step back from Extreme E commitments with British team Veloce Racing in 2022.

Off-road racer Christine Giampaoli Zonca will switch from the Xite Energy team to claim the vacant seat. Veloce is yet to announce its male driver to partner the Italian-Canarian driver known as 'Christine GZ', but South African Lance Woolridge impressed on his debut at the 2021 season finale at Bovington last month.

"I'm so excited to be joining Veloce Racing this year," said Zonca. "I learnt a lot last year and I think that's important going into Extreme E's second season. Together with the team, I think we can achieve great things and we'll definitely be targeting podiums..."

Veloce team principal Rupert Svendsen-Cook added: "With a very short break between season one and two, we've not backed off to ensure we kick off 2022 on the right foot and Christine GZ stood out as a driver above all others, who with very limited mileage, made very impressive as well as rapid progress in 2021."

GRIZEDALE STAGES CANCELLED

Rally organisers forced to end efforts to save event after competitors dropped out

Photos: Kevin Money, Michael Boak



Grizedale last ran in 2019

By Luke Barry

The 2022 Grizedale Stages has been called off, after being postponed from last December due to a shortage of entries.

Originally supposed to run on December 3-4, damage from Storm Arwen caused the fixture to be rescheduled, with organisers agreeing a new date of January 14-15. The change of date prompted entry numbers to fall from 84 to 54, however, with the drop in numbers meaning that organisers couldn't meet their breakeven point.

In a statement, the organising team explained their rationale, saying: "This would represent an £18,000 loss, and

considering the event has assets of £5000 the organisers decided they didn't need an accountant..."

"The cancellation was clearly hard for all involved with the event, with feelings still raw after their efforts to go ahead.

"We are not in a position to comment on the future of the event," added the statement. "The figures do not take account of the hundreds of voluntary hours put in by the organising team, nor their feelings of disappointment."

The last time that the Grizedale event ran in 2019 it was won by Ollie Mellors. Starting from its debut event in 1988, the event had run every year up until then except 2010 when it was called off due to heavy snow.

BOAK TO CAMPAIGN HYUNDAI IN BRX TOP CLASS

British Rallycross Supernational and Super 1600 event-winner Michael Boak will graduate to the top flight Supercar category this year with a Skoda Fabia.

Engineer and driver Boak is most known for racing a self-built, spaceframe chassis Audi TT in the Supernational division, and has more recently campaigned a Citroen C2 Super 1600 machine developed by his MB Motorsport concern.

For his graduation to the top flight, Boak has bought

the Volland Racing-built Fabia formerly campaigned in the European Autocross Championship by Dutch driver Adrian Boele.

Boak will convert the car into rallycross specification, and contest rounds of the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy and the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship in 2022.

He said: "It's a natural progression to aim for the top of the sport and I'm lucky to have a great team behind me

so the time is just right to step up to Supercar.

"After always driving self-built and developed machines we wanted a car that was already developed, but still wanted something a little different.

"When the Fabia came up for sale it ticked all the boxes and we got it just before Christmas... It will be a massive achievement for the team to race in Supercar after a lot of hard work, and a dream come true for me."



Boak is already testing the Skoda Fabia ready for full 2022 schedule



Loeb announcement imminent for more XE outings

LOEB EXPECTED TO STICK WITH X44 FOR 2022 XE SERIES

Nine-time World Rally champion Sebastian Loeb is understood to be preparing a return to the Extreme E series for its second season with Lewis Hamilton's X44 team.

Although no announcement about either the team or Loeb's participation in the series has

been officially confirmed, the French driver has suggested that he will return with the same squad. Together, Loeb and Spanish X44 team-mate Cristina Gutierrez topped qualifying in all five XE rounds last season, but only once converted that pace into victory, at the final round on

the Bovington tank ranges.

The pair's consistency meant they were tied at the top of the standings with the RXR team, but lost the title on wins countback. "It was a challenging championship for us, but the last race was the best so far," said Loeb.

"I'm confident we will do

even better next year..."

Both Loeb and Gutierrez are currently busy competing on the Dakar rally, while Loeb will return to the World Rally Championship when its 2022 season begins on the Monte Carlo Rally later this month, taking the wheel of M-Sport's new Ford Puma Rally1.

OBITUARY

Dave Read

Motorsport News would like to send its condolences to the family and friends of Dave Read who passed away on New Year's Eve.

Read, who contested his first rally as a co-driver in 1979, was a regular face on UK events. He started more than 100 rallies,

most recently in 2019, but it was for his decade-long partnership with Malcolm Hauge that he was synonymous.

Involved as the rally director of the North West Stages, Read won the Volunteer Official of the Year from Motorsport UK in 2019.

OBITUARY

Gavin Heseltine

Motorsport News was saddened to hear of the passing of Gavin Heseltine, who embodied the true clubman's rally spirit in a co-driving career of more than 300 rallies with 22 different drivers, beginning in 1983 alongside Bob May in a Vauxhall Firenza.

An interest in map reading was sparked in Heseltine's youth as a

member of the Air Cadets, although he never learned to drive a car and travelled to events on the train and with the assistance of friends and fellow competitors. Despite this lack of time behind the wheel he was devoted to the sport, becoming a pillar of the North Humberside Motor Club and serving in roles as diverse as magazine editor,

procurement officer, results keeper and stage designer on most of the club's rallies.

As a competitor, Heseltine's career continued alongside administrating the sport, winning the 2006 ANCR Clubmans title and 2011 BTRDA Silver Star. His final outing came as recently as the Malton Forest Rally alongside

regular driver Allan McDowall in November last year, one of more than 130 events together, before passing away peacefully at home on December 23.

The funeral will be held on January 14 at 1330hrs at The East Riding Crematorium, Octon, Driffield YO25 3BL, with requests for donations to the British Heart Foundation.



A rallying life



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HISTORICS

DOWN THE PUB

MEIRION EVANS

Boss of Wales Motorsport
Age: 43 Lives: Newcastle Emlyn



There was a fleet of Evans cars

They ran five cars on the Roger Albert Clark
“There was a very, very serious amount of behind the scenes work and maybe some people that have done it before will understand how much work was involved. But I was lucky as some of the crews that were doing the event had some really good professional or semi-professional co-drivers, who did a great job in helping with the organisation.”

It was a huge project
“We had 29 people in our team. Four of the five cars were cars we had built. Paul Barrett’s car came to us at the start of the summer to do three or four events leading up to the Roger Albert Clark. We changed it quite a bit. Ron Morgan’s car was brand new five months ago.”

He now builds engines
“Four of them had our engines. it’s just something I’ve been working on for a couple of years behind the scenes without saying too much as I always do. I try and keep it close until I get it right. We’ve probably done getting on for 15 engines in the last six months or so.”

They are renowned for car builds
“I think we’re now in the late 60s in terms of complete car builds, mostly historics and there are more in the queue. My wife Ann now works in the business as well and she’s very good behind the scenes. I’m very passionate about the reliability we produce with the cars. I’ve got four other good guys who work with me.”

The R.A.C. was big...
“The event is done before you leave home. There will be hiccups, it’s the Roger Albert Clark Rally and that’s what it’s there for, but the majority of the work in getting to the finish on Monday afternoon is done in the workshop before you start. I’ve done the Roger Albert Clark obviously and worked on it as well. I understand what’s involved and what’s ahead. And that’s why it has attracted so many people.”

Five cars was enough
“We had interest beyond the five that we ran. There’s an event next year that sounds like we might be increasing again up above five. But I’m not sure whether we can do that or not. We’re going to have to have a good think and see whether I can put the right team together.”



Crews will receive a return on cash

Photos: Ben and Paul Lawrence

BUMPER CASH REFUND FOR SHORT-CHANGED R.A.C. RALLY RUNNERS

Generous organisers hand back money for lost mileage on marathon event

By Paul Lawrence

Every competing crew on November’s Roger Albert Clark Rally will receive a refund of £435 against the competitive mileage lost to Storm Arwen.

The five-day event was badly impacted by the storm, which arrived on Friday evening (November 26) and blew trees down across the north of

England and southern Scotland. Saturday’s leg, which was due to take in the Scottish stages of Greskine, Ae, Twiglees and Craik, had to be cancelled completely as fallen trees made the stages and access roads impassable. Sunday’s leg in mid-Wales was also affected by fallen trees but a mighty local effort during Saturday salvaged all bar the Gartheiniog stage, which had to be cancelled. However, the balance of

Sunday and all the Monday stages ran as planned. Now, the event organisers are refunding crews for the lost mileage.

Rally manager Colin Heppenstall said: “The impact of Storm Arwen resulted in the event losing 93.4 miles of forest stages which would have cost the event £60686.44p [to use]. This amount will be split between all 139 starters and therefore each crew will receive

a refund of £435.”

Refunds will be made during January and spectators who bought Saturday tickets will also receive a refund.

Heppenstall has confirmed that he is now pushing ahead with early planning for the next edition in 2023, which will mark 20 years since the first Roger Albert Clark Rally in 2003. Details about the 2023 date and route outline will be confirmed later this year.



Ben Friend will be among leading historic battlers in 2022

Thriving BHRC in store for 2022

Historic rally crews have given the 2022 British Historic Rally Championship a big thumbs up by entering the opening round, the Riponian Stages, in numbers not seen for nearly a decade.

More than 50 registered BHRC contenders are among 136 entries for 120 places on the February 6 event, which will be making its BHRC debut. Although September’s Trackrod Historic Rally has long been a key BHRC event, this will be the first time

that the early season Yorkshire forest rally has been a round of the historic championship.

The stellar BHRC entry for the Riponian includes defending champion Ben Friend, Nick Elliott, Roger Chilman, Joe Price, Simon Webster, Adrian Hetherington and Matthew Robinson.

The Thirsk-based event will cover six special stages over 44 miles and feature central servicing at Wombledon airfield.

Busy schedule for Vintage battlers revealed

The Vintage Sports-Car Club has confirmed a programme of four race meetings and seven hillclimbs as the core of its competitive schedule for 2022.

In a break with tradition, the Silverstone race meeting moves to July 17 and is replaced in April by the Cadwell Park race meeting, which will now open the season on Easter Saturday (April 16).

Other VSCC race meetings will be at Donington Park (June 5) and Mallory Park (August 21).



VSCC men now have dates

The club’s speed event calendar is again capped by visits to Shelsley Walsh (July 3) and Prescott (August 6-7). Rounds at Wiscombe Park, Harewood and Loton Park are all on the schedule.

Alaska to Mexico to headline Rally the Globe

Rally the Globe has unveiled a bold new rally for 2023, offering entrants a 7500-mile adventure on the Alaska to Mexico Marathon.

Running for 30 days from late August, the trans-America event for vintage and classics will take competitors from the landscapes of Alaska to the tropical beaches of the Baja Peninsula in Mexico.

Gravel, asphalt, mountains and deserts are all part of the plan, with rest days scheduled for Whitehorse and Osoyoos in Canada, and Moab and Palm Springs in the USA. The competitive element of the event, which is open to all pre ’77 cars, will take in a mix of regularity sections and special tests.



KINGSLEY'S FESTIVE SPOILS

Simon Kingsley was the class of the Plum Pudding Historic Sporting Trial over the Christmas break as he took a resounding overall win in his post-historic Kincraft. After 18 muddy hills at Buriton in Hampshire, Kingsley was 19 marks clear of historic category winner Ian Wright (Cannon). Wright had a day-long battle with the similar car of John Fack.

IN BRIEF

Willan heads back

The opening round of the MN/HRCR Clubmans Rally Championship, the Tour of Cheshire, enjoyed a deluge of entries as soon as entries opened for the March 5 rally. In very short order, a total of 78 entries were lodged for the 75 available places. Many leading contenders are entered, including defending champion Dan Willan in his Volvo PV544.

July show date

After a Covid-enforced gap of two years, the Stoke Row and Nuffield Motorsport Day is set to return on Sunday July 17. The gathering of race and classic cars will be based at the workshops of Iain Rowley’s Delta Racing at Nuffield near Henley on Thames and will once again raise thousands of pounds for local charities. The concurrent Maharajah’s Tour will continue.

Boucles pushed back

In order to try and avoid the impact of Covid restrictions, the date of the 2022 Legend Boucles at Bastogne has been moved back one month to the weekend of March 5-6. The Royal Automobile Club Spa is hopeful that the Belgian historic rally will be able to run as planned in March rather than on the original early February date.

Global success

Rally the Globe will open its 2022 event programme with the Generations Rally on March 25-27, based in the Lake District. Created to encourage younger family members to experience historic rallying, the novel Generations Rally has proven to be a success. The entry list is full, and a reserve list has been opened after more than 70 crews entered the rally.

Historic trials

Two trials will run in parallel at Long Compton in Warwickshire on Saturday May 21 as the 10th Anniversary Historic Sporting Trial shares the extensive venue with a Heritage Sporting Trial for the early post-war trials cars. Each event will have dedicated hills to suit the particular cars. The site hosted the inaugural Historic Sporting Trial in May 2012.

Eifel cash boost

The organisers of the Eifel Rallye Festival have now raised more than £40,000 for the victims of the flooding that hit the region last summer. In addition, manpower from the MSC Daun club is supporting repairs to affected properties. The 10th running of the Eifel Rallye Festival is due to be held from July 21-23 when the event’s core feature will be to mark the 50 year anniversary of the first World Rally Championship contest.

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Landmark result for Merc's star as he denies Norris a maiden win

LEWIS HAILS A MAGICAL MOMENT AS HE HITS A CENTURY



Hamilton left it late to pounce for his 100th win



Lewis has achieved his big target

By Matt James

Lewis Hamilton has hailed his rivals after landing his 100th grand prix win in Russia on Sunday, snatching the victory from fellow Brit Lando Norris.

From pole position, McLaren man Norris seemed set to take his maiden victory until a late rain shower left him slithering off the circuit. Hamilton had been called in by his Mercedes team and swapped tyres. He was able to hunt down Norris and take the race win in the dying moments.

Hamilton, who finished one place ahead of his title rival Max Verstappen, says the 100-win benchmark is something he finds hard to believe. The seven-time champion said: "It's a magical moment. I could only ever have dreamed of still being here and having this opportunity to win these races and get to drive against such phenomenal talent this late in my career and to continue to building with Mercedes. I'm so proud of everything we've done, not only on track but also off."

Full report: p4
Special feature:
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COLUMNIST

DAN CAMMISH

MN's new regular columnist who has bounced back into the BTCC

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Hindsight is a wonderful thing. At some point every one of us has wished to be able to see what the future may hold. Looking back 10 months or so I remember thinking this a lot. In early 2021, I would sit with my fiancée Libby or call my dad and we would play out each scenario.

Sometimes the conversation would last hours, and we would mull over every little detail of a future that hadn't even happened yet.

After many sleepless nights and countless conversations that inevitably went around in circles, I decided that all I could do was make the best decision with the information available. I didn't have a crystal ball. I didn't know if ultimately it would be right or wrong, but I knew that I had to stick with my gut and to the plan I set out with.

It was a big risk returning to Porsche Carrera Cup last season. Could I really turn the clock back to be as competitive as I was, in such a short space of time, and up against such a fierce rival as Harry King who had dominated the year before? The Porsche is notoriously difficult to drive with a unique driving style. I would have to readapt to such a point that I could not only compete but win against a such a high level of competition. I'd be lying if I said I didn't have the occasional doubt, but I also remember having total confidence that it was possible, and I was determined to prove the doubters wrong. I remember reading a comment early on that said my career would be over at season's end. Fair to say that comment didn't age well, and it worked wonders for my motivation.

On the other hand, I did have a last-minute opportunity to remain in the British Touring Car Championship for the season. A single appearance at Thruxton with BTC Racing in a Honda Civic had yielded strong results including a podium and the opportunity was on the table to stay. At this point I had already committed to Redline Racing for a Carrera Cup



Cammish gambled and won with Porsche return

return and despite the offer I wanted to stay true to my word. It did have its positives though, a strong team with good people who could offer me the chance of BTCC success.

Truth be told the 2021 season was only ever about one goal: keeping my name at the forefront of people's thoughts and bouncing back into the BTCC for 2022 and beyond. I knew that if I stuck to my plan and delivered results that I had a very good chance of making it happen.

Fast forward 12 months and I am happy to report things worked out exactly as I had hoped. That isn't to say it was straightforward, far from it in fact. But I would be lying if I said this wasn't the plan all along. Deciding between the aforementioned options was truly a difficult task. Had I chosen to stay in the BTCC at the last minute in 2021 I have no idea how that would have played out. The team was hugely successful, and I am sure I would have had every opportunity for success. That being said returning to Carrera Cup yielded a record-breaking third championship and the timing led me to the NAPA Racing UK drive. A drive that I truly believe to be the best in the whole BTCC paddock.

They say sometimes things happen for a reason and I truly believe this to be one of those occasions. Even without the benefit of

hindsight I sit here relieved to have chosen the correct path, and if I had to do it all again, I wouldn't change a thing. The pressure to rise to the challenge of last season can only benefit me in the future and it feels good to be a champion again.

So now to the future with Napa Racing UK. I first sat with Pete Osborne at Donington last year and it was clear from that moment that I wanted to be involved. He is a Yorkshireman like myself. We get on very well and I believe Motorbase to be in good hands with him at the helm. I have spent a good few days in the workshop already getting acquainted with the team and learning about the car. The new hybrid system will bring a different challenge to us all but it is one I am looking forward to. The addition of reigning champ Ash Sutton is a real boost to the squad and between us I believe we offer the strongest driver pairing on the grid. We have always got on well over the years and there is nothing but respect between the pair of us. It is a real privilege to have been chosen to be part of this team and I think we can look forward to much success over the coming years.

My next column will certainly focus more on the now and the season ahead, but I felt it was worth starting with a look at last season and how I ended up here. Until next time, cheers.



Cammish had a shot at the BTCC in 2021 with BTC



Team boss Osborne (I) and his new driver

"If I had to do it all again, I wouldn't change a single thing"

FEATURE

ONE ROAD ENDS: ANOTHER BEGINS

Targas are preparing the ground for the next generation of club rally organisers and competitors, writes Nick Garton



Cleared for take-off: Targa rally action has much to offer



Steve Retchless (l) and Alan Wakeman enjoy discussing Targa matters

Road rallying in its traditional – and arguably ‘purest’ form – stands on the brink of extinction. Yet rather than simply mourn its passing, the BTRDA’s focus on Targa rallies has met with unprecedented levels of entries – even in the depths of a pandemic.

Steve Retchless, a veteran road rally man who competed throughout the discipline’s golden era in the 1980s, retiring at the end of the decade but returning to the sport in 2005, explains: “I came into Targas kicking and screaming because of the lack of road rallies in the north of England where I’m based.

“We’ve got three or four motor clubs within a 50-mile radius from me, up in the north, who do scatter rallies in the summer, they do 12-cars in the winter and then maybe an odd road rally. But it’s very sparse.”

Just as the World Rally Championship led the revolution from the top down towards central service areas with fewer road miles, so Targa rallies are working upwards to bring the grassroots to a more accessible and sustainable footing.

Targas can vary a great deal in format and terrain, using single or multiple venues, but the essence is that they are limited to an average 30mph on the competitive tests. Doing so means that the costly safety equipment required to take part in traditional stage rallies can be avoided and, while car preparation is key, it is possible to participate in a ‘standard’ road car. Not only are these costs to the competitors reduced, but so too are those of the organisers.

“On a road rally you’ve got much more to do to get off the ground,” says Retchless. “You’ve got to get your route in to Motorsport UK, you’ve got to negotiate with them anything that they might find as a problem, then you’ve got to PR the local community on that 200-mile route to get them behind it, then you’ve got to find enough marshals to run the event safely.

“I don’t know why it is, but it’s just really hard to get the marshals signed up. We are dramatically short of marshals. I think we’ve only had about three road rallies and I think that’s the reason. Covid didn’t help anybody, and the different measures in England and Wales and elsewhere have made it harder. But it is what it is: it’s not going away, is it?”

To a section of the rally community, Targa rallies remain an anathema, written off as ‘glorified autotests’. Yet there is room for creativity in the format of the events, an elasticity that has surprised even a veteran such as Retchless.

“When the BTRDA introduced Targas, my thinking was quite simple: me and Sasha [2021 champion Targa co-driver Sasha Heriot] discussed it and it didn’t

look like many people at our level that we knew in rallying, people like John Davis: semi-pro, old-fashioned people with a little bit of standards. There wasn’t that many, and I said ‘we should really do this...’

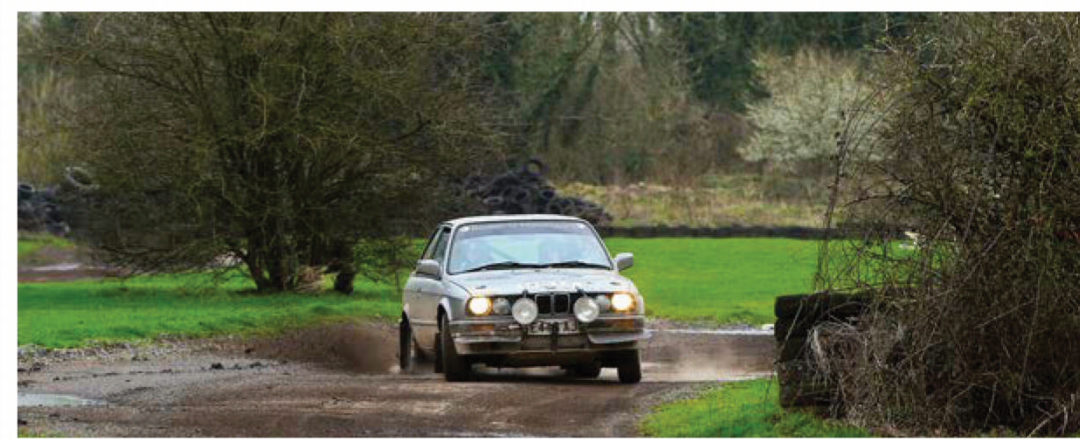
“There’s such a wide range of events in a full season that you really have to get out and try as many as you can in order to work out which ones suit you best, from those that feel quite fast to those that are like autotests, to find ones you enjoy.”

Encouraging newcomers to find a place in the sport, whether competing or officiating, is the theme that BTRDA Targa Road Rally Championship top man Alan Wakeman holds dearest.

“I’m very much focused at bringing people into motorsport,” he says.

“I’ve had three kids who have come through motorsport and they’ve all benefited greatly from the experience, not only in terms of driving but also in terms of life skills.

“My daughter in particular just left university and during all of her job interviews motorsport came up because it was seen as strange for a girl. She’s won



An average of 30mph doesn’t preclude drivers from using their skills

Photos: M&H Photography



Retchless in attack mode with his RS2000



Experts and novices can compete for honours in Targa competition



Bone stock or fettled, a broad church of cars can take part in Targas



Addressing the marshal shortage is a priority



Tarmac events are proving popular with drivers of classic machinery

two national championships and it's a very good conversation piece, it shows she has talent and can succeed, she knows how to interact with people – and at the very least can get up in the morning!"

Growing the attractiveness of Targas may consume the majority of Wakeman's waking hours, but he remains convinced that these events are just one strand of a wider tapestry that the sport needs to create as a whole.

"Motorsport UK has got to step up as well and come up with some solid value propositions as to why people should be involved with motorsport," he says.

"The StreetCar initiative was created three years ago as a mechanic in showing all the things you can do in a standard car without personal safety equipment – car trials, autotests, autosolos, Targa rallies, 12-cars, autocross. All those disciplines can be done without rollcages, helmets, overalls and the associated cost. Ian Berry was putting it all together but he's now leaving because the travel to Bicester was a bit of a pain as he's down in the south. It's not clear who is going to be picking that up.

"The way I look at it is, if you're interested in competing in an asphalt-based event, do autosolos. Many people have gone on from autosolos to sprinting, hillclimbing and so on. If you want a mixed surface environment, do Targas, from where you can move on to other environments, stage rallying or rallycross being the most obvious."

Whether it is from novices taking their first tentative steps into the sport, or from veterans looking to find events that scratch the ever-present itch to compete, it is clear that Targas have found a large and growing congregation of weekend warriors to enter them.

"The majority of quality Targas are filling in no time at all," Wakeman confirms. "[This year's] Bath Festival, that one opened on January 3 and immediately went to 108 entries for 90 places, so unfortunately some people have been disappointed."

"Most are over-subscribed in a few minutes: I think the Hatsford Targa last year was six minutes for 60 entries and we're finding that the majority of Targas will be full in 10 minutes."

Increasing the number of events to meet this level of demand is one option, but it has to be sustainable. A boom-and-bust in Targa events, either through too many events with too few entrants or with prospective entries being put off by the failing to secure a starting number, could potentially be disastrous for the sport long-term.

Managing the demand is something that Retchless in particular believes is going to be key, and that this will mean urging the regional motor clubs into action. "Alan was the driving force to the BTRDA to get this championship up and running, and it's good. It's a fantastic, brilliant idea. I think what he needs is more regional championships to support it."

"We really need two levels of Targa: a club Targa which allows people in without a rollcage, without a lot of safety stuff, like a less intensive autotest type of event. Do three of those, and then you'd be able to qualify to do what I'd call a 'Targa pro' and that is how I'd describe those events that we currently have in the BTRDA championship."

Increasing the number of clubs who

adopt Targa rallies should be a fairly straightforward process when looking at the competitor numbers at other events. Yet there is some residual mistrust of something other than 'proper' rallying that has been detected.

"Some of the issues we have is there's lots of people with old attitudes in motorsport," Wakeman concurs.

"Don't get me wrong: we need them, they're the backbone of motorsport. But we desperately need to be innovative to do things in different ways to bring people in. We need to be relevant. I don't think it's an age thing... I know many young people with old attitudes!"

"But I'm seeing new clubs like South Oxon: they're great. They felt restricted by some of the other clubs around them, so they created their own club and there's some young people there with some great ideas and they're moving forward positively, engaging with apps and social media and so on."

"I think that the FIA Rally Star campaign has shown that there are people in esports, gamers, who really want to be involved in physical motorsport. They have skills and knowledge of things like social media and bring an attitude that clubs could tap into."

The digital revolution may provide a new means for rallying to reach people, but this is one area where the experienced eye of Retchless takes a slightly different view. To him, as with many others, rallying is about people above all, and the motor clubs are where people meet and ideas take shape and knowledge is shared over a drink and a sandwich. Covid may have curtailed gatherings of late, but bringing people back together is the key to success in his view.

"Nobody goes to a motor club anymore

and there's a lot of keyboard warriors," Retchless chuckles. "Modern competitors don't keep up with the rules and regulations and everything... We used to use the regs and final instructions as the bible because if you got something wrong that was it: the rally was lost. And some of the new lads aren't actually doing it, and I think that's half the battle, is having the experienced people at the motor clubs helping them."

For Retchless, this has meant taking time out to answer a lot of questions from less experienced competitors on events or through Facebook, particularly on the vexed question of tyre choices. This is one of the few areas of administration which all those involved with Targas believe needs some debugging. Different interpretations of the Blue Book by various clubs have proven worrisome to those not as well versed in the rules.

"People like me, the experienced lads, we want to help people," Retchless explains. "Last year I had a lad message me because he was travelling down from Oswestry to Kent, he'd read the regs and he just couldn't make out the tyre rules. I'd hate somebody to travel all that way and get told on Saturday morning that you can't start because you are on the wrong tyres."

Despite such worries, the success of the BTRDA in creating a series that is so heavily subscribed, and nurturing a genuinely accessible form of rallying for newcomers, is clearly a hit that even Covid can't derail. A flame has been lit which could help sustain the grassroots of British rallying through what are almost inevitably going to prove tricky times in a changing world. ■



Targas offer motor clubs a more straightforward event to organise

"The majority of Targas will be full in 10 minutes"

Alan Wakeman

FEATURE

WHEN FORMULA 1'S STRIKE FORCE WON THE DAY

*Forty years ago, the grand prix season began with a picket line. By **David Addison***

The 1982 South African Grand Prix nearly didn't happen at all



Champ Nelson Piquet was in hot water with his team boss Ecclestone

The start of a new Formula 1 season always generates huge excitement and 1982's opening event was no exception. On Thursday, January 21, fans awaited the 1000hrs start time to the first practice session. A total of 31 cars were in the pitlane. The anticipation was matched only by...silence. There wasn't a driver in sight.

The 1982 F1 season would go down in history as one of the strangest. It had a World champion who won only one race and each race brimmed with controversy, acrimony and tragedy. Amid the other drama, the drivers' strike is sometimes forgotten. It didn't last long, but for a brief while camaraderie and a little mischief held sway in F1.

The cause of the strike was clauses in the new superlicence form (the permit required by all grand prix drivers), which related to a driver's contract with their team. The catalyst for that was Alain Prost's move from McLaren to Renault which so angered McLaren that teams started to want to protect their investment in a driver.

John Watson, himself a McLaren driver, remembers: "At the end of 1981 we were notified by the GPDA [Grand Prix Drivers' Association] of a new requirement in our contracts. It was a fait accompli and it effectively gave the teams rights over our intellectual property and moved us towards a football-style contract.

"We were going to be treated as a commodity and the teams would control

prices of drivers on the market. We had signed our contracts in good faith but then over Christmas it all started to come to a head. We, collectively, said 'Hold on! This is a restraint of trade' and started to complain."

There were two drivers very willing to go into bat for the rest of the grid. One was Didier Pironi, the Ferrari driver having already held discussions with FISA president Jean-Marie Balestre over the Christmas period. The other Niki Lauda. "It was Niki's first race back," remembers Wattie, "and [he was coming back] for a significant [wage]." Lauda was never a man keen to hand over money to someone else...

Lauda was quoted at the time as saying: "I could imagine transfer fees, as in football, and the horse-trading and contract buy-outs there would be. Deals would be struck between teams, leaving the drivers caught in the middle, like idiots."

As the drivers gathered in South Africa, the situation was no nearer a resolution but the drivers held firm. They were united and rather than go to the paddock, 30 of the 31 boarded a coach that awaited them at the circuit gates and set off to the Sunnyside Park Hotel in Johannesburg.

The one missing? Jochen Mass, the March driver who lived in South Africa and was sponsored by the South African-owned Rothmans tobacco brand. Somehow, he missed the bus...

Pironi confronted Balestre, who told him that no driver had objected in December when the contracts were issued. Pironi pointed out that he was given 10 minutes to read a document in English rather than his native French.

Balestre riposted that drivers signed it anyway. Pironi pointed out that some drivers were only given the second page of the two-page contract to read or, if that was too subtle a ruse, were just threatened with losing their drive altogether.

The clause that irked the drivers the most was this: "I am committed to the above team to drive in the FIA Formula One World Championship[s] until the19..."

The second contentious clause barred anyone from criticising the FIA in public, promising a ban if they did. The drivers, understandably, didn't like that either.

Balestre, who was from a publishing background rather than a diplomatic one, remained unmoved. The teams felt that their drivers had been spoiling for a fight for some time. The drivers meanwhile, all locked away, started to enjoy each other's company. Eventually.

"It was an uneasy environment at first," recalls Watson, "a bit like boarding school but people started to do things to help the atmosphere. We started to learn about each other because we weren't just drivers, we were people. Elio de Angelis, for example, was a fantastic classical pianist and it was the first time we had seen him play or really knew about that side of him. Gilles Villeneuve could play a Scott Joplin rag, but it was all he could play. He was a one-trick pony but it was entertaining, but the strangest one was Bruno Giacomelli: he'd come from the communist area of Italy and how he had learned this I don't know, but he was able to show us, on a blackboard, how you took apart and then reassembled an AK-47! Given my background from Northern Ireland, I found it very interesting. We didn't learn



Pironi (l), Villeneuve and Lauda were all involved



The grand prix cars were readied, but there were no drivers



Top team bosses were left to ponder who would fill the cockpits



Briton John Watson finished in sixth place

it at school, so I hate to think how Bruno knew how to do it!”

The piano wasn’t just used for entertainment. When Arrows boss Jackie Oliver arrived to have a frank conversation with his drivers, the hefty instrument was pushed against the door to bar his attempts at entering.

As Thursday continued with no cars on track, Lotus mechanic Clive Hicks hoodwinked the media by donning de Angelis’ overalls and helmet before firing up the Lotus’ Cosworth DFV engine. Discussions continued and gradually the wording was changed to placate the drivers, but as Thursday evening beckoned, they were still huddled in their new digs, sleeping two or three to a mattress laid on the floor of a conference room.

Carlos Reutemann, who had been teased to his irritation by Nelson Piquet, went to sleep in his overalls and got his own back on the Brazilian by snoring so loudly that no-one could sleep until Villeneuve threw a blanket over him to muffle the noise. Some team managers ventured fruitlessly to talk to their drivers, returning to report a sense of unity among them. Meanwhile, the wives and girlfriends were at the Kyalami Ranch and sat down for dinner, as did Balestre. Reports came of him needing to fend off an attack of bread rolls. Hell hath no fury like a woman’s driver scorned...

On Friday, one driver broke ranks. Teo Fabi headed back to the circuit, under pressure from Alex Hawkridge at Toleman. Fabi was set to make his F1 debut and didn’t want to ruin his chances.

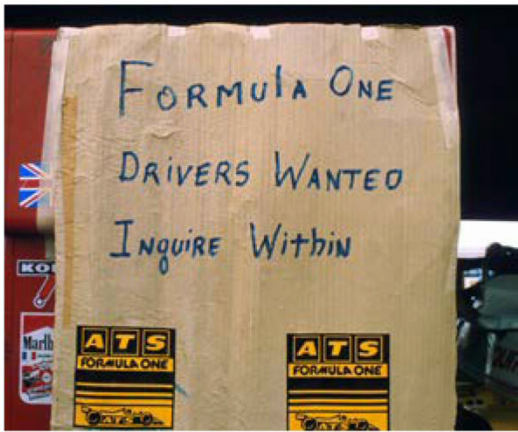
Keke Rosberg was against the strike and about to sit in the first competitive F1 car of his career, but remained furious

with Fabi for breaking rank. He said that the little Italian “ran like a chicken”.

One story did the rounds, denied by Fabi, that he had escaped through a toilet window. Either way, he was joined by Mass who never made it to the Sunnyside Park after all. Mass completed a few token laps before he was black-flagged. Bored, mechanics from the other teams offered fanciful lap times on their pitboards until Jochen returned to applause from the entire pitlane!

At 1000hrs, Lauda received a call from Pironi who was at the track. Suddenly, peace seemed to have broken out. The drivers headed back to the circuit and were in the paddock by 1100hrs but some seemed unaware of what the new terms of the agreement were. Don’t worry, they were told by Pironi and Lauda. FISA had agreed to amend that clause, and review the second which drivers objected to, and that seemed enough to restore harmony. Practice and qualifying went ahead as planned.

Was it all worth it? Watson feels that it was: “It was the first time, other than for safety, that the drivers looked after



Anyone fancy a Formula 1 deal?

themselves. It was a try-on from the teams really whether the contract could have been enforced is debatable because they were so one-sided.

“A lawyer may have said that they were unfair, but any legal aspect was never tested. The contracts were meant to keep down prices on drivers but it is quite possible that supply and demand would have trumped the contracts anyway.

“We all felt that we were doing a good thing but we were also conscious that striking wasn’t ideal and that we were probably breaching our contracts! In the end, Balestre lost face and we got on and raced.”

The Kyalami race promoters were getting jumpy and realised that the race may not happen at all. They started threatening to sue the teams if there were no race, and the teams started looking at replacement drivers if no solution could be found with the strikers. Team managers were, understandably, unamused. Their cars had been sitting idle for a day, not a great look for sponsors. Worse, they had lost in their dispute with drivers. One such team

“We all thought we were doing the right thing”

John Watson

boss, Brabham’s Bernie Ecclestone, took typical action towards his number one driver, Nelson Piquet. When the reigning World champion walked down the pitlane on Friday, he discovered his own car, team-mate Riccardo Patrese’s and also the spare all carried the number ‘2’ rather than ‘1’, which prevented Piquet from taking part in practice.

“It’s not a punishment,” Ecclestone said innocently. “I’m worried about his safety. He hasn’t slept all night and might not be fit to drive.” Ah, yes. Always time for health and safety in the workplace...

Another driver who felt the wrath of his team was Roberto Guerrero. The Colombian, due to make his debut for Ensign, had looked good in testing but team principal Mo Nunn didn’t let him out, withdrawing the entry on the basis that Roberto wasn’t in a fit state having been in the drivers’ strike. Others felt the reason was that if the Ensign didn’t run, pre-qualifying wasn’t needed, while another reason may well have been a writ served on Nunn by the German Formula 2 Maurer team which believed it had signed Guerrero’s services for 1982.

For one driver, there was a silver lining. Brian Henton, dropped by Toleman, had rocked up in South Africa with his race kit, just in case. He hadn’t headed to the hotel with the other drivers but stayed at the circuit and as the politics of the situation became too much for Arrows driver Patrick Tambay, the Frenchman retired from F1 after a few laps in practice. Henton got a drive after all, although he failed to qualify for the race.

The race was all about the turbocharged cars that worked well in the thin air at altitude. Prost won the race from Reutemann’s Williams with the second

Renault of Rene Arnoux in third, but the saga of the weekend wasn’t over yet.

The drivers, except Fabi and Mass, were ultimately fined between \$5000 and \$10,000 and the stewards issued a statement explaining that a truce had been reached for the sole purpose of running the race.

Once the race was over, so was the truce it said, and that meant that all drivers on the AA (superlicence) list were suspended. This, the drivers felt, was Balestre going back on his word and so the matter went before the FIA Court of Appeal in March, which duly reduced the levels of the fines and suspensions in the hope of getting on with the season. The FIA Court of Appeal also criticised Balestre and FISA for trying to control what the drivers would be able to do, so it effectively came down on the side of the drivers against both Balestre and the teams.

And so the season continued...

The next significant political flashpoint came at Imola, where the FOCA-affiliated British teams boycotted the race in protest at the disqualification of Piquet and Rosberg from first and second place in the Brazilian Grand Prix. Brabham, Williams and the other FOCA teams were in the habit of topping-up fluids before post-race scrutineering after running well underweight for the race.

Having risked his career to go on strike at Kyalami, the irony of the Imola protest was not lost on Rosberg. “Frank Williams was hard on me for South Africa,” he said. “But now I had to miss a race because I was driving for a FOCA team. No-one apologised to me...” ■

FEATURE

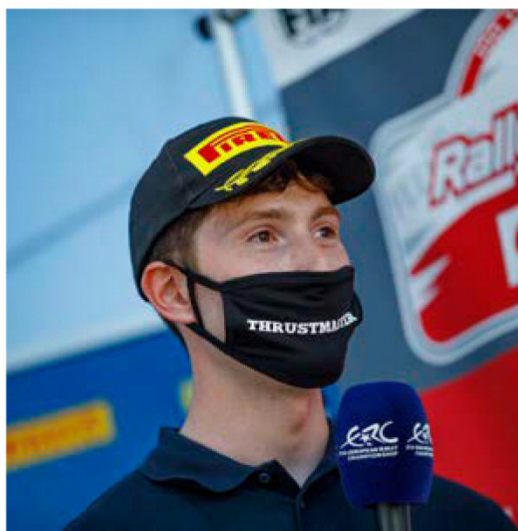
THE YOUNG RALLY STARS WITH

MN's guide to 15 sub-Rally1 level drivers destined for big things

In May 2020, Motorsport News published a list of 10 drivers it reckoned will make it as World Rally Championship stars in the future.

For 2022, we've upped the number by half, such is the depth of talent on display at sub-Rally1 level right now.

And while Victor Cartier, Oskari Heikkinen or even Dominik Stritesky might not mean much right now, given a chance – and plenty of cash – MN has identified them as drivers packing the necessary punch to shine on the global stage in a few years from now.

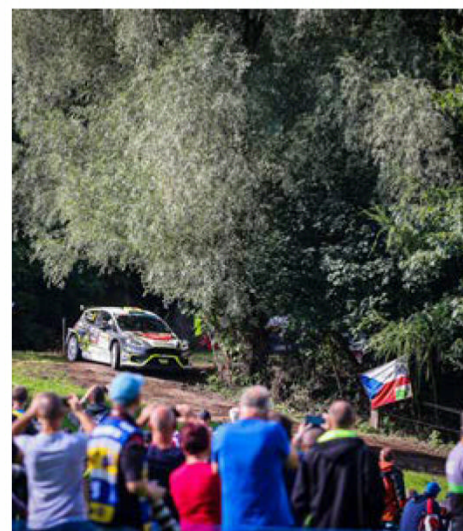
1 NEW ENTRY JON ARMSTRONG

Age: 27 **Nationality:** Northern Irish

2021 record: 2nd, JWRC; 2nd, ERC Junior

Armstrong came back from the brink in style in 2021 having barely competed since 2016 with two wins and the runner-up spot in the Junior WRC Championship. And it could have been the title had fortune favoured him more often. Also showed form on his return to ERC action with victory on the opening round of the new Rally3-based ERC Junior category.

MN's verdict: Return to form in 2021 was just the start for the comeback kid.

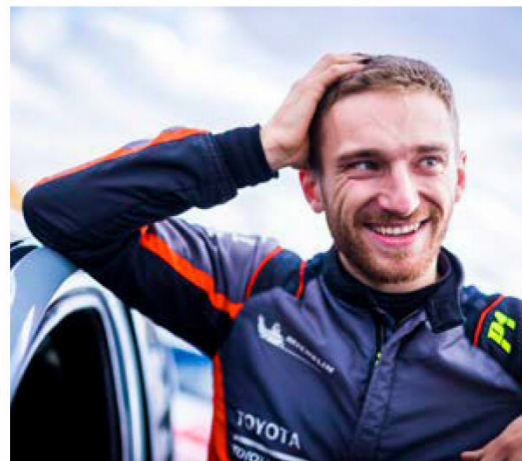
2 PREVIOUS ENTRY ERIK CAIS

Age: 22 **Nationality:** Czech **2021 record:**

6th, ERC

Downhill mountain bike rider turned rally driver continued to shine in 2021 once he'd got over a bout of Covid. After being half a stage away from winning his home round of the European championship, Barum Czech Rally Zlin, he rebounded by showing good pace on gravel in the Azores and in Fafe before claiming third in WRC2 on his World championship debut in Spain. Given his lack of experience – he's heading into only his third full season at international level – the Czech federation-backed talent's potential is enormous.

MN's verdict: Needs to continue learning in ERC before switching to the WRC full time.

3 NEW ENTRY VICTOR CARTIER

Age: 25 **Nationality:** French **2021 record:** 5th, ERC2

Built a Toyota Yaris into a Rally2 Kit car because he couldn't afford the real thing, Cartier once battled Adrien Fourmaux in the French Junior championship. His ERC2 campaign in 2021 should have netted more reward but he was frequently undone by faltering equipment, the legacy of his limited budget.

MN's verdict: Would benefit from focusing on driving, rather than being a jack of all trades.

4 NEW ENTRY WILLIAM CREIGHTON

Age: 24 **Nationality:** Northern Irish **2021 record:** 6th, JWRC; 1st BRC Junior

Would have benefited from an ERC3 Junior campaign rather running before he could walk by stepping up to the JWRC but credit's due for testing himself at a higher level. With JWRC switching to four-wheel-drive Rally3 cars for 2022, Creighton faces another steep learning curve if he's able to secure a second season in the category.

MN's verdict: Having tasted international action, a second stint away from the UK is a must.

5 NEW ENTRY JEAN-BAPTISTE FRANCESCHI

Age: 25 **Nationality:** French **2021 record:** 1st, ERC3; 1st, ERC3 Junior

Ex-Junior WRC frontrunner Franceschi was exemplary as he marched to an ERC title double having honed Renault's all-new Clio Rally4 into a winner. His speed and consistency, allied to a new-found maturity, were much in evidence, but injuries sustained in a crash on the French championship-counting Rally du Var last November were a setback he certainly didn't deserve following an excellent season.

MN's verdict: Still has what it takes to shine on the world stage, once he's fully recovered.

6 PREVIOUS ENTRY NIKOLAY GRYAZIN

Age: 24 **Nationality:** Russian **2021 record:** 6th, WRC2

There were too many mistakes for 2021 to be a Gryazin classic but there were myriad impressive performances nevertheless from the young Russian. Frequent car and team swapping wasn't ideal as he looked for a life beyond his long-term squad, Sports Racing Technologies, although he enjoyed some of his best moments with the Latvian team.

MN's verdict: Sound move to Toksport WRT for 2022 could make Gryazin unstoppable.

**7 NEW ENTRY OSKARI HEIKKINEN**

Age: 20 **Nationality:** Finnish **2021 record:** 1st, Finland SM4

A class winner in last season's Finnish championship, Heikkinen is already so well thought of in his homeland that his national ASN, AKK, has selected him as a wildcard for the FIA Rally Star European Final in Germany later this month. He'll be keen to put on a strong show before then when he switches to a Ford Fiesta Rally4 from Esapekka Lappi's RTE-Motorsport operation for this weekend's Arctic Lapland Rally.

MN's verdict: Unproven at international level and alien to asphalt but there's raw talent.



THE TALENT TO MAKE IT TO THE TOP

8

PREVIOUS ENTRY

CHRIS INGRAM

Photos: FIAERC.com, JWRC/M-Sport, acropolisrally.gr, Toni Ollikainen/AKK, Loudlife Media/AKK, Jarrod Sierociak



Age: 27 **Nationality:** British **2021 record:** 4th, WRC3
MN won't stop believing in Chris Ingram until he stops believing in himself. Fortunately, that shows no sign of happening despite his struggles with mental health. The Mancunian, who won the European title against the odds in 2019, has a brilliant knack of getting things done with no fuss despite the odds and misguided comment from people who should know better often being stacked firmly against him. He did everything he could to take advantage of his WRC3 chance for 2021 and his two podiums – including the runner-up spot in Greece – represented excellent return.
MN's verdict: With Toksport running the show and Ross Whittock co-driving, Ingram can go far and there's budget in place to help make that happen.

9

NEW ENTRY

EMIL LINDHOLM

Age: 25 **Nationality:** Finnish **2021 record:** 3rd, WRC3; 1st, Finland
Finnish title and twin wins in WRC3 were proof that Lindholm has the consistency to match his natural pace. There were mistakes, however, but far fewer than in the past, which points to a bright future.
MN's verdict: If he can build on the momentum from 2021, this Flying Finn will go far.



10

PREVIOUS ENTRY

EFREN LLARENA

Age: 26 **Nationality:** Spanish **2021 record:** 2nd, ERC
With continued support from the Spanish federation, Llarena made the most of his second season in Rally2 machinery to finish runner-up to Andreas Mikkelsen in the ERC, although funds were tight following his Fafe smash. Co-driver Sara Fernandez's calming influence kept him focused when it mattered.
MN's verdict: Needs to drop a few kilos and gain a few more euros in his bank account but—Llarena remains a tip for the top.



11

NEW ENTRY

JOSH McERLEAN



Age: 22 **Nationality:** Irish **2021 record:** 9th, WRC3
Covid-enforced event cancellations made for a disjointed start to his year, but he showed well in WRC3 in an ageing Hyundai i20 R5 although would have benefited by focusing on the ERC given his limited experience.
MN's verdict: Very capable and still young. Hopefully his backers remain patient and loyal.

12

NEW ENTRY

MAX McRAE



Age: 17 **Nationality:** Australian/Scottish **2021 record:** 1st, Western Australia R2
While his name got him the recognition in the first place, there's clearly a case of something in the family genes based on the teenager's initial showings Down Under. Grandad Jimmy has been impressed from what he's observed from the passenger seat and the five-time British champion knows a thing or two about what it takes to be a good driver. With father Alister a grounded influence, Max has the chance to make more progress in his first season in four-wheel drive.
MN's verdict: Providing he keeps his feet on the ground, McRae Jr can go far.

13

PREVIOUS ENTRY

SAMI PAJARI

Age: 20 **Nationality:** Finnish **2021 record:** 1st, JWRC; 3rd, ERC3; 2nd, ERC3 Junior
Beat Jon Armstrong to the JWRC crown at the final round but didn't quite have enough points on the board to prevent Jean-Baptiste Franceschi taking the European equivalent. Nevertheless, the young Finn won the title that really counted and bagged a whole heap of experience, particularly on Tarmac, along the way.
MN's verdict: Monte entry in Rally3 Fiesta is a perfect example of Pajari's keenness to learn.



14

NEW ENTRY

YOHAN ROSSEL

Age: 26 **Nationality:** French **2021 record:** 1st, WRC3
Made MN's top 10 WRC drivers of 2021 list following his WRC3 title triumph, that was decided on the final stage of the season and came despite his Acropolis Rally exclusion.
MN's verdict: Got over his gravel woes to show pace on both surfaces. WRC2 glory awaits.

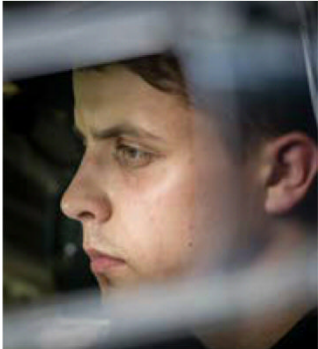


15

NEW ENTRY

DOMINIK STRITESKY

Age: 21 **Nationality:** Czech **2021 record:** 5th, Czech Republic
Stritesky was on his seventh start in a Rally2 car when he tore one almost in half during a monster crash on Barum Czech Rally Zlin that left him dazed. Skoda Motorsport likes what it sees in Jan Kopecky's protégé and Stritesky shone on the first of two outings in a factory Fabia with second place on Rally Bohemia.
MN's verdict: Lacking in terms of years and experience but bulging with promise.



FEATURE

JONATHAN LEWIS: I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT 'WHAT CAN WE IMPROVE?'

The Mini racing marvel and top team boss tells **Graham Keilloh** some of his many amazing stories from on and off track over four decades in motorsport



Lewis has success as driver and boss

Over the last four decades it has been hard not to notice Jonathan Lewis in motorsport at home and abroad, and not only because you'll struggle to meet a more colourful and engaging character.

Behind the wheel he has been a frontrunning fixture in highly competitive and popular Mini racing. He sampled the car from an early age – indeed, as we find out, a very early age – and became Mini Se7en champion as a teenager.

Lewis though had many more strings to his bow and not only as a versatile driver, as he also was a successful and innovative team boss at several levels of single-seater racing, including for the famous Van Diemen Formula Ford works team. And Lewis's skills took him right the way up to winning at the first attempt the championship in the direct Formula 1 feeder contest World Series by Renault 3.5, with Alx Danielsson driving for Lewis's Comtec Racing team in 2006 beating many prestigious names. Lewis more broadly has worked with plenty of noteworthy drivers.

And he's done much more besides on and off track including, as we discover, even an appearance on BBC's famous Top Gear programme. He remains prominent today, mainly via his Snetterton Speed Shop concern running and building cars for customers, and he still occasionally gets into the driver's seat himself.

Now he answers Motorsport News readers' questions. And given all that we've said, it's worth going back to the very beginning.

Question: When and where was your first race and what were you driving?

Stuart Bowes

Via Facebook

Jonathan Lewis: "Strensall Autograss Club, which is still going, near York, and it was a Mini, my brother's Mini because he raced in autograss racing and there was no such thing as Juniors back then. So they let me start at the back of the ladies' races, just at the lunchtime. It was pre the ladies having the power they've got now to have their own series. I would start at the back but within a few weeks I was winning, and I think I'd have been about 14, 15, and in the end they just let me tag on with the men at the back.

"It was pre all the health and safety and danger. I mean, it was so crude compared to today's autograss cars. You look at today's cars and they're incredible, aren't they? The build of some of them, but these were cars with the windows just kicked out and a basic rollcage and that was it.

"That was my first ever motorsport

event and then my first circuit race was Mallory Park in the Mini Se7en championship, when it was 850s. That's where circuit racing started, if you like."

MN: Any particular reason why it was Minis to begin with? Was that just what was available?

JL: "I suppose because I grew up with Minis, and my mum made the local paper the Yorkshire Post when I was six years old, because she had me sat on her lap driving in a Cooper S, an original, old, Mk 1, tartan red-and-black-roofed Cooper. And I was sat on her lap steering the car and we were driving on the back roads to the pub that I grew up in. We had a head-on with a Ford Anglia and mum got into a lot of trouble, even though I was driving.

"I was only six, you see, so they couldn't really throw the book at me. I think she made the front cover of the papers for that and she was very frowned upon but if I was crashing Minis at six, I was inevitably going to race them, wasn't I?

"I think that my brother was racing them in autograss when I was eight, nine, 10 and my uncle Ken gave me an MOT failure Mini, which I used to have in a field. I'd just drive round and round non-stop. They were through my 10, 11, 12-year-old and I learnt to repair them and look after them and I suppose, really, I had no option. I was born into a Mini, really."

Question: Who was your best rival in Minis?

Paul Lawrence

Via Facebook

JL: "Over the years, I suppose due to the lack of skill I had in my first season, it was probably a guy called Chris Tyrrell. He's long gone, now. Without me realising at the time, he'd taken me under his wing and he was teaching me and I was his little protege. I just thought he was a nice guy and we were rivals.

"Yes and Patrick Watts. I never really had much early racing against Steve Soper, but obviously we all looked up to Steve because Steve was one of us who made it if you like and lived the dream.

"But yeah, Chris Tyrrell probably was the greatest. And then the hardest bastard nowadays is Endaf Owens because he can make the cars and he can fix them very easily. So he drives with this lunatic gay abandon, but you can't help but like him. And he will play silly buggers when you're flat out racing, he'll look at you and make a V-sign or something, which I quite enjoy. It's a bit of fun.

"I've been very lucky because I've raced against the best of the best. Peter Baldwin is probably the living god, but Peter was always just very fair and very clean. I think it's the bastards you always remember and the ones who, like Tyrrell, were teaching me. Then, many long-gone drivers really."



Lewis in familiar territory running at front in Minis

Question: *The nickname ‘Monkey’ seems to have stuck with you for the last 41 years, originally endowed by Mini 7 legend Chris Tyrrell. How did the early experience of racing with Chris and his contemporaries shape your future career?*

Jeffrey Parish
Via Facebook

JL: “Well, like I say, Chris, without me realising it, had taken me under his wing and was teaching me. Jeffrey also has been a good friend of mine since I was a kid. And Jeffrey once, I had a great race at Snetterton. You’ve got to remember I’m 18 years old, it’s 1980, you can’t afford to test, they hadn’t really invented proper testing back then and it was a long way from home, and I had to tow the car, well I drove the car down in ‘Animal’, my old bus, and slept in it and we lived in Animal during the season.

“The problem for me was, back in 1980, there was prize money and there was what was known as special tuning vouchers from British Leyland. So if you won races in Mini Se7en, you actually could do quite well. You’d get £400, £500, £600, which was a lot of money then. You think the entry was only £30. So, I needed to win to get money to afford money to carry on but also to go home, to buy the petrol for the coach to get home. Because the coach ran on petrol, bloody thing.

“So we got to Snetterton, and Tyrrell had decided that I stooped as I walked, and I looked like a little monkey. So, he started

calling me Monkey. So, for that race, it was pre-graphic designers and sticker people, like you have now. I’d got number plate letters and stuck across the front of my car ‘Monkey’, right across the front of the bonnet and from that day forward, Marcus Pye was the commentator, I was Monkey Lewis and it sort of stuck.

“And during that race I had an amazing fight with Tyrrell, but Jeffrey had told me before the race, he said ‘watch Tyrrell, because he will do the same thing to you every lap, into the old Russell’. I don’t know if you remember the old Russell but that was a corner, sorting out the men from the boys and you had to go flat out through it, absolutely flat.

“He [Parish] said ‘he will do a different thing to you every time, coming around Coram into Russell but on the last lap, he’ll do the opposite’. Jeffrey had warned me, bless him. So, sure enough, last lap, he’s pushing me around Coram and I’m about to win this race. So, I thought, right, I remembered what Jeffrey said and did the total opposite and I beat him to the line by about a few thousandths of a second. It was a mega finish.

“That was the first time the week after in Motoring News, as it was then, there was a picture of Tommy Byrne chucking his nose cone away tucked up the back of Jonathan Palmer to win the Formula Ford race, and then below was me and it said ‘Jonathan Lewis made a monkey out of usual pacesetter Chris Tyrrell’, and that’s how it stuck, the name Monkey. That was

continued on page 22



A late run of results got Alx Danielsson 2006’s World Series title with Lewis’s Comtec Racing team

FEATURE

the first time I'd ever had a picture that year of me in Motoring News."

Question: I know that you, like me, think that Peter Baldwin is a Mini legend. Can you let us know how he was when you raced against him, and any stories between you that spring to mind?
Martin Short

Via Facebook

JL: "Yeah, Peter he's probably the greatest living Mini driver. I hold him in higher regard than people like Paddy Hopkirk because to me Peter: been there, done it, got the T-shirt, but after all that, he's probably one of the nicest guys you'll ever meet.

"And I was a horrible bastard with him. I had to be because he was so good that, to beat him, I had to employ tactics that not many people would do with Peter, like leaning on him, pushing him, pushing him wide.

"You've got to remember, when you upset Peter you upset the whole of the Mini Se7en Club. I was like a lead balloon, but I had to try and beat him because I can't see the point in doing it if you're not going to try and win.

"I remember we were at Snetterton one year again, and Peter did a time in qualifying that I just couldn't believe was possible. In my head, I was convinced there must be something wrong with his engine, I was a typical naive kid and believed that. But then, I followed him in the race and realised what he was doing around the Bomb Hole and Coram, copied him and gained that pace.

"Then, we were going into Russell again but the new Russell now [a chicane] for the win and Peter and I are side by side and I didn't lift, and I hit the inner kerb. Well I hit him so hard in his passenger door that it buckled his floor in.

"And he's still got this car, it's probably the most damage that this car's ever had, and we both limped towards the line with flat tyres and buckled suspension and that was the most angry I've ever seen Peter. I felt so bad. He's a great, great friend and I love him to bits. And he forgave me, as only Peter could but yes, I should have thought about it a bit more and I didn't, in my desperation."

MN sets the scene: Lewis late last year oversaw three star drivers in Formula Ford's blue riband end-of-season events, the Formula Ford Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy. First Roberto Moreno raced Lewis's Van Diemen RF80 at the Festival then Kelvin Burt took over the RF80 for the Hayes racing alongside Warren Hughes in Lewis's Royale RP26. **Question: After chatting to you at the FF Festival in 2021 you obviously still have a huge passion for running good drivers as well as racing yourself competitively. What gives you the greatest buzz?**

Ian Temple
Via Facebook

JL: "That's a funny one, isn't it? I always felt in my head and I don't mean this like it sounds but if I can beat you, you're not brilliant. If I think I can't beat you, you must be good, and that's not me being big-headed, that's just me levelling up the

people. You see, I've always been a massive fan of Formula Ford and I remember, in the early days of Mini racing, I would get out the car and run to watch the Formula Ford race because there was only so many series and we were always tagged on because of Leyland sponsorship with the British Formula 3s and the British Formula Fords.

"So I got to see some of the greatest from Trevor Van Rooyen, [Nigel] Mansell, [Derek] Warwick, all that lot cutting their way through the junior ranks and then doing Formula 3. I was one of the few Mini drivers that would make sure I watched their races. I was in awe of these people and Van Diemen and the works team. I knew they were better than we were.

"We were Mini racers. We were club racers. We were working men going and having a bit of fun but these were tomorrow's superstars, that were living in this country and all from Brazil or wherever; I remember all Senna's early races. You just think, well, they're the real drivers and you get such a kick when you get somebody in your car that you know is not only way better than you'll ever be but on a different level and you get to see it and watch it and feel it.

"I've been very lucky that I've worked with or become friends with some great drivers, and I probably do get more of a buzz winning a race with a driver that when he gets out of the car I think 'Jesus Christ, you're good'."

MN: On that subject, obviously you had the Festival and then the Hayes with three very well-known drivers. What was that like?

JL: "That was cool. It was cool to have Roberto and bookend it a little bit with Roberto and he's 60-odd years old. He's buggered his neck up and he still honestly thought, with an 1980 car, we could win this event.

"It was very funny, but he was great fun, and he was great with the people and his fans, and it was just lovely to do it. It's something I'll treasure in my head because I'd watched him [in 1980], I remember him turning up the week of the Festival, on the Wednesday and I was in the garage with the late Pete Argetsinger, who was a good friend of mine. We came out of the garage because we saw the Canadian Club car going onto the circuit and got our stopwatches and I think on Roberto's third lap he did a time, I can't remember exactly but I want to say like a 58 [seconds] rather than a 59 and we were all blown away and it was way quicker than anybody could go.

"Pete looked at me, and he went 'well, we're f***ked'. I went 'yes, I think we are'. And he went on to dominate that event. Well imagine 40-odd years later, for me to have a pretty good replica of that car, with him in it and Micky [Galter, Moreno's 1980 mechanic] as the mechanic. It was just a special moment, a special thing in time.

"Then the week later to get my two mates and they are my mates. They were great drivers, but they're also my mates, and to get Warren and Kelvin back again,



Lewis thought outside the box to beat the big guns

at the same time, and it was like nothing had changed. I mean, we just laughed and laughed and laughed the whole four days of the testing and the Walter Hayes.

"The Walter Hayes and the Festival are such great events because it's pure. Nobody's cheating and if they are, it's bloody obvious. You sit there and it's pure and the winner at the end is pure. That's something that you can't really see in all these bloody winged cars and carbon cars, but Ford is pure, and it frames people. It's the greatest formula ever invented."

Question: What's the most outrageous story from his career in motorsport that would still be allowed to be published?

Ida Wood
Via Twitter

JL: "The best one was when we did Vauxhall Junior, which was also a great

series, we were one of the support races in the TOCA package and this is when the TOCA package was at its absolute height. Wherever we went, they'd block the circuits up. You'd have to be in at 0600hrs otherwise you weren't getting in.

"We had a mechanic, who's still a mechanic now, in go-karts, called Mark Rose and Mark used to be a great DJ in Yorkshire. He was being paid £1000 a week back in the '90s by the top clubs like Mister Craig's and they'd basically fight over Mark.

"Well he loved being a mechanic and so he was running one of my cars in Vauxhall Junior and we went to a club in Dunfermline, near Knockhill. As we walked in, he went up to the bouncer and he said something. There's about six of us in the team and we walk into this club, and we hear the guy say over the Tannoy 'we're so lucky tonight, ladies and gentlemen, we've got Magic Mark from the Virgin breakfast show in, and his crew'. So I hear this and I'm thinking 'oh f***k. What's going to happen now?' Of course, Mark knew exactly what he was doing.

"He goes up onto this DJ box, gets this guy's microphone and all his equipment, completely takes over this club and starts running competitions, giving away the guy's CDs. This club's eating out of his hand because the DJ they'd got wasn't very good and then he's going 'the first girl to be topless is going to win this, win that'.

"We get out of this club alive. The next morning, all the drivers, James Thompson, [Jason] Plato, all that lot are

going, 'where are you lot going next week when we're at Brands'? I said, 'we're all going to go down into a club'. [They said] 'Oh, we're coming, we're coming'.

"So he'd do the same thing at Brands Hatch and then he did it at Thruxton. Basically, the Virgin breakfast show, which no-one had ever listened to, so nobody was aware that Magic Mark didn't really exist. We got to the stage where he was raffling off brand-new Fiestas that we didn't have. It was just the funniest season and the funniest year. The trouble he got us into.

"But that was probably the most outrageous thing we ever did and nearly everybody in the TOCA package wanted to know where we were going because we would have these amazing parties. So at the end of the year I decided we need to throw our own party and we'd won the championship with I think it was either Doug Bell or [Antonio] Pizzonia. I'd been to Ibiza and seen a foam party, so I bought a foam machine, an actual proper foam machine.

"We put it up in the awning, we printed these passes out and handed them out around the paddock. It was a proper foam party on Sunday night. Well I got one of my guys to switch the foam machine on and off and sure enough this party kicks off, it's probably legendary as one of the best parties in the TOCA paddock ever, to this day. Everyone's in there, James Thompson, [Alain] Menu, and we're having good craic.

"And sure enough, Mick, as he's called, switched the foam machine on and everybody's dancing. I switched the

"I get a kick running a driver who is on a different level"

Jonathan Lewis



Lewis loved pairing with Warren Hughes (pictured) and Kelvin Burt



Moreno drove Lewis's RF80 in 2021's Festival

strobe on and then I realised that it's so much foam in this awning, it's nearly half full of foam now. It's now seeping into the plugs. So, the foam is live.

"Everybody's so pissed but they're getting an electric shock from the foam, and it was just fantastic and I'm going, 'Mick, Mick, pull it out'. We pulled out and all of a sudden people carried on dancing, and nobody was any the wiser, but they were all getting belted to the music by this foam. Yes, that was the most outrageous season. But I'm too old to do it now."

Question: *Your achievements as a team manager in single-seaters were outstanding. What was your best 'clever' moment that completely outfoxed the opposition?*

Martin Short
Via Facebook

JL: "That's a good one. We somehow ended up doing the World Series [by Renault], which was a huge deal the year we did it. We were up against some of the greatest drivers: [Robert] Kubica, Will Power, Sebastian Vettel and all this.

"We were always looking for the advantage. We'd been on the shaker rig, as it's now called. We come up with this quite different set-up, quite soft, with these funny little bump rubbers and what have you. Alx had a bad run, but we realised that through something I'd learnt years before that the human ear cannot detect when wheelspin is starting, it can detect it but if you could slow down what you're hearing, you're detecting it after it's begun, which is why traction control

works so well, which is why it's banned because it gives you an advantage.

"But what we realised was if we ran the car in the wet map it was quicker in the dry but no driver in their right mind would ever believe it. So what we did is we would run the car permanently in the wet map, but we would tape up the light, because it had a little light to show it was in the wet map, so nobody would know. In the end I think we actually damaged the bulb so that nobody could tell, but this car won the championship at places like Spa and Nurburgring and it was on the wet map. There was nothing illegal about it, it's just that nobody would have believed you if you did it. So that was one of them.

"We practised, practised, practised pitstops and I made one of the very early quick-drop jacks. Because I was short and stocky I put myself up to be the front jackman and we would do the pitstops and it's quite daunting, when a car the size of a World Series car is hammering towards you. It's alright when it's your number-one driver, who you trust, but if it's your number-two driver, who's basically there because he's paid a big budget and he's coming towards you, you think, 'oh, for f**k's sake'. Because at my age I don't fall over very well.

"We'd made this jack with a motorcycle brake lever on it, that would release the front, which is nothing now but back then it was pretty special for a little tiny World Series team to have come up with an idea. We got our pitstops down to about 4.8s, changing two fronts, which again is nothing but back then it was a big deal.

"We [also] realised that the rules stated

that the pitlane is open when the leader starts his whatever lap they decide it would be, let's say 11th lap. Well we know that if we weren't leading, when the leader starts that lap we could come in, as long as we didn't pass the pitlane entry line before he passed the start-finish line. So we were coming in a lap before everybody and people couldn't work it out because they were going 'no, no, no, no. It's not that lap', and I said, 'yes it is, when you looked at the timer we were right'. I think we won three races on the bounce by doing this, before the others worked out that we were right in what we were doing.

"We were just playing the system and that was probably one of the best moves we ever pulled at that level. That and the wet map."

MN: Discovering these things that other people weren't discovering, was it just thinking differently? How do you think you managed to spot these things?

JL: "I think it was thinking differently and thinking 'how do you beat the best of the best?' We realised that there was time in the front jack in getting the jackman away, and we practised and practised. Another thing we did which I don't think that the others did, is we bolted an upright to the wall of the workshop at the height of the car on the jack.

"It's about, let's say, a foot and a half off the ground. And we would then, each week, have a whiteboard and the mechanics would have a competition to see who could put the wheel on, put it off at that height, quicker than the others. We were doing that right the way through the winter, coming up to the race. So we were

continued on page 24



Lewis reckons Antonio Pizzonia (c) had "Senna-esque" talent



Comtec, with its notable front jack and jackman, prepares for a stop

FEATURE



Lewis and Danielsson in '06 took a run of wins in a hastily built Dallara



Lewis remains a colourful presence at UK race meetings



Lewis's daughter Morgan is showing entrepreneurial skills in baking

pre all Formula 1 teams and test teams and all the stuff they've got now, we were making our own test rigs but they were simple.

"What it got them used to was kneeling and banging a front wheel on and off, at a foot and a half. Anyone can do it when it's on a trolley and we got it so that they were in a way getting fitter without us realising it.

"Then we had the guns tuned, the Paoli pitstop guns. We found a guy who could tune the guns, so we had them tuned and we had titanium sockets. We went to town on what we could, with the budget we had, and we made the bit that we could make a difference, make a difference. The thinking outside of the box, well that's what I've always thought like: 'what can we improve?'"

MN sets the scene: Danielsson with Lewis's Comtec Racing team won the 2006 World Series by Renault 3.5 championship with a late-season run after two non-finishes at the mid-season Spa meeting.

Question: *After Spa 2006, did you think you'd be able to lead the team to victory? What did you have to do as a principal to get everyone there in the end?*

Alx Danielsson

Via Facebook

JL: "That's a good question. That was a very dark day. He [Danielsson] destroyed the number-one car at the top of Eau Rouge. Sebastian had done, like you saw recently, one of the big crashes on his own and he was spinning up the hill. He's OK but the car's throwing its wheels off in every direction and Alx had gone flat chat up there and hit the rear end.

"It had destroyed our tub and we got a tub off Dallara, and we worked through the night in the awning, totally got the car rebuilt. We're leading the second race;

going through Blanchimont the rear tyre blew and destroyed that car again.

"So we'd got a bill of nearly quarter of a million euros with the Dallara lorry, in 12 hours. I sat there and I thought 'right, how do we get around this?' I basically went to Dallara and begged them to side with us and help us because if not, we were lost, because the trucks immediately went to the Nurburgring [for the next round]. And so they agreed to stage the payments on the parts, which is unheard of because they don't do that.

"Then I went to Renault, and I've always had a fantastic relationship with Renault, with Tim Jackson who was the motorsport boss of the UK. I said, 'look, any help you can give us because otherwise we're bollocks'. I basically think they all just didn't harass us for the money and helped us and we were given another tub in Spa. We stayed there on the Monday and Tuesday and the Wednesday, in the awning, in the paddock, rebuilding again this car, and we turned up in Germany, and Alx was all right, he was a bit bruised but he was OK, and it was only a week later, a brand-new carbon [car], not a bit of paint on it. We stuck some stickers on it, we sent it out and he dominated the event.

"And what was great was as he pulled in the pitlane, I mean it's a pretty ruthless business is motorsport and at that level it really is, nobody was really very friendly. The truckies are all mates but that's about it. The mechanics get along.

"It's a bit like you saw with Toto [Wolff] and Christian [Homer]. There's no love. As Alx came in the pitlane, every team turned and clapped. It was an incredible feeling and we all burst into tears because we were knackered, we were destroyed. We were quarter of a million plus in debt and Alx turned it round.

"That boy really should have gone on to better things, but he had a tragedy in his

life with his mum and dad and an accident. It's such a shame because lovely kid, great kid, good friend. And from that day it was really weird, it was like it was meant to be because that car didn't really lose very much after that. It was just such a good car, and it was thrown together in an awning in the paddock at Spa."

MN: I take it wrapping up the title, that was a good day as well?

JL: "That was unbelievable. I remember as we won it, I suddenly realised we'd won 35 grand but because we owed Renault so much they gave us a pretend cheque and kept the money. But it was amazing. I mean, who'd have thought?

"And Trevor Carlin had been taking the piss out of me all year because when we won our first race by doing the early pit thing, he was a bit tricky with me, and I like Trevor and he bought me a glass of whisky at the hotel, and he said, 'enjoy that, because that's the last one you're going to get this year'. He'd got Sebastian, remember, and Red Bull, so he was in the hotseat, and I said 'all right thanks very much'.

"And when we won it, we went to the awards ceremony, I walked up to Trevor and I plonked a bottle of whisky in front of him. I said, 'I'm really sorry, I don't suppose you expected this'. But I've got respect for Trevor. I don't know how he does what he does. But, he and I, great rivalry.

"The Spanish team called that Kubica drove for [Epsilon Euskadi], good team. They won it the year before with Kubica. And obviously you had [Draco Racing], the Italian team. It was a tough series."

Question: *Who was the best driver you ever ran?*

Paul Lawrence

Via Facebook

JL: "The most gifted, in my head, was



Lewis pushes on in a Renault 5 Turbo in 1990

Antonio Pizzonia. He was a real monkey. He’s from Manaus in Brazil, so I nicknamed him Monkey Boy.

“Just the ability to do things and get a car where he got it, just blew my brains. I remember him winning a race once and I just thought ‘Christ, this kid’s so special’ that I made sure I kept his overalls because I was convinced he was going to be a World champion and I thought these things would be worth a fortune one day.

“And he didn’t, but it just goes to show at the early level you just don’t know. Look at [JJ] Lehto and people like that, you were convinced you were seeing greatness, but they just didn’t click or didn’t get the right cars. I don’t know what went wrong with Antonio, but I’ve run many drivers who were great, like Marcos Ambrose, Ralph Firman Jr, Dougie Bell, all these people, Warren, Kelvin but the one that stands out as giftedly special, probably is Pizzonia.”
MN: Were there particular things about him that stood out? Was it purely pace or was there other aspects?

JL: “It was just he was Senna-esque. I remember we were testing in Vauxhall Juniors at Donington this time of year, freezing bloody cold and he came in and he goes ‘I am 2mph down’ and I’m like

‘yeah and?’ He says ‘there’s something wrong’. And sure enough he was 2mph down to what he was used to. So we’re thinking is it the wind or whatever?

“So we changed the battery and he went 2mph quicker, and you think ‘Christ, how does he feel this?’

“Then I remember another day, we had a little buggy that we’d use as a pitlane buggy. Like a Daihatsu, it was like a little pickup thing. And he said ‘can I drive?’ And I said ‘yeah you drive’ and I sat next to him. Well I’ve never seen anybody change gear as fast in my life and I thought ‘Christ, if this is what he’s doing in a paddock, and he does this in a car...’ He was just at another level.

“He could just feel things and you remember Senna doing stuff like that and Pizzonia was very much in that mould.”

MN sets the scene: Lewis’s daughter Morgan has recently started a bakery business, called Bakeaholics.

Question: *How many times have you had to let your race suit out since Morgan started baking???*

Susan Preston

Via Facebook

JL: “[Laughs] Luckily I haven’t because

believe it or not I’m not a mad cake eater. Even though she bakes it right next door and everything, I like the caramel crunch and stuff, but I think I’m fat enough. But I don’t think I’m going to get any fatter. I just am fat now. But I can see exactly what she means. I think if you were a cake person and I’ve got to meet plenty of them in the last three years, yeah you could pile it on.”

MN: Morgan also did some racing herself, didn’t she?

JL: “Yeah I became a karting dad, didn’t I? I wanted her to do what I’d done and so we got her a little Mini 7 and what have you, but she wasn’t as mad on it as I was.

“I always thought that I would never push someone if they didn’t want to do it. When I was waking her up on a morning to go racing, rather than her running into me, going ‘come on dad, let’s go’, I knew she didn’t want it as much.

“She’d come last in her first race. I said [for the next race] if you can beat a car you can have those training shoes you want. After the race, she came in, she goes ‘I passed him, I passed him. You owe me the training shoes’. I watched the video and as she passes this guy she punches the air and I thought, the training shoes mean more to

you than the actual event. So I realised there and then, so I sold the car on. She wasn’t born to be a racing driver. She was born to work a mixer and run a company.”
MN: I take it that side of things is going well, the baking?

JL: “She’s incredible at that, yeah. And a great little worker: got that from her mother. She’s going to be a little entrepreneur without a doubt and she’s got so many ideas in her head. We just stand back and can’t believe that this little person has got so much passion for what she does.”

Question: *What was it like to do Top Gear with Richard Hammond?*

Alexander Cameron

Via email

JL: “It was good fun and he’s from Ripon, he’s a Yorkshire boy like me and I did my apprenticeship in Ripon, and we got on really well. He turned up and we made him a seat for the cars and what have you. There was a lot more to that film because what happened was two weeks later he tried to kill himself in that bloody stupid jet car. So I was getting rung up by every Tom, Dick and Harry because we’d done something for the BBC.

“A lot of people were saying ‘he’s a journalist, he shouldn’t have been doing this, he shouldn’t even have driven an F1 car and all this’. So the film was canned. It was never going to be shown because of all the outcry. And I remember saying, on some BBC radio show, that he’s actually a really good driver. He mucks about and makes out like he’s crap but he’s not crap. He’s better than I am.

“The reason I knew it is, originally the film was going to be a much longer film than what people see today, where he was in a Clio and I’m showing him the lines and chucking him around and talking to him. Then he goes on and he drives the

two-litre car. Then he drives a World Series car. Then he gets in [Fernando] Alonso’s car. But because of the outcry against it, it got canned for, I don’t know, nearly a year, maybe more.

“When they eventually showed it, it was a much shorter piece than had originally been filmed but over the three days we were filming it, down at Silverstone, we all got on like a house on fire. We had good fun and the thing is what you don’t realise with Top Gear is there’s a huge crew there and each cameraman is talking to you. And they’re going, ‘go on, laugh at him, he’s crap, isn’t he?’ You go ‘no’. But that doesn’t make good telly, does it? So if I suddenly start laughing, and go ‘God almighty, he’s crap’, that’s the bit they use because you’re making a TV show.

“But it was great fun. The funniest thing I’ve ever seen is where I’ve been translated into, I think it’s Danish, [I’m] shouting at people in this Danish voice and it’s just really funny.”

Question: *What takes up your time these days?*

John Lunn

Via email

JL: “Guiding Morgan. I can’t tell her because she doesn’t listen, I guide her as best I can. We’ve still got a few historic cars here and got this F3 and a Formula Ford and stuff. We run them and I run Kev Bottomley and a couple of other customers but mainly just I bubble along. I’m quite happy, going out and being with my dog and not doing an awful lot, I must admit.

“Yes, just being alive and doing what I can, helping the family, helping Morgan. I cook a lot of meals, I like doing that. I see a lot of Ralph [Firman Sr] and [wife] Angie. They’re great friends. Watching the girls grow and evolve into whatever they’ll both become, and being with my cockapoo Dexter.” ■

“Richard Hammond’s actually a really good driver”

Jonathan Lewis



Lewis’s competition experience even includes powerboat racing

FEATURE

TEN GOOD REASONS BRITISH F4 IN 2022

*Much is new and noteworthy in the BTCC-supporting junior single-seater championship this season, as **Graham Keilloh** outlines*

When the British Formula 4 grid forms up for its 2022 season-opener at Donington Park on April 22-24, you may get the sense that things look a little different.

That's because they will be. Much this season is new about the junior single-seater championship for those aged 15 and above that runs on the British Touring Car Championship's TOCA package.

The championship has a new organiser, in more than one sense, in Motorsport UK, which will be assisted by the British Automobile Racing Club, and that's only the start of the changes. We've therefore picked 10 things to look out for this year in the revamped series.

ABARTH UK-SPEC ENGINE

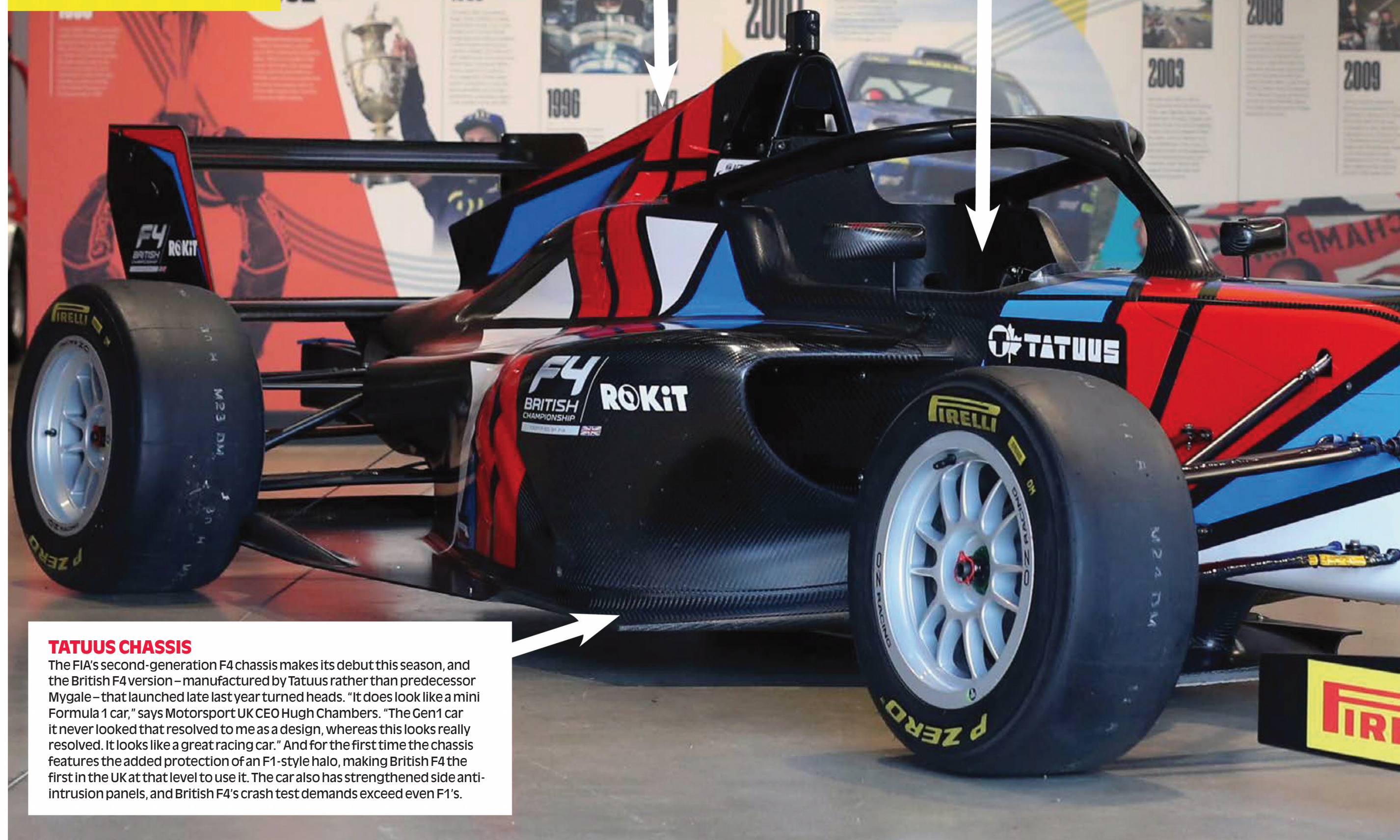
The British F4 engine supplier, like that of the chassis, is new, with power now coming from an Abarth unit rather than a Ford. Moreover adopting the 'mainstream' F4 Tatuus-Abarth combination gives British F4 teams greater flexibility to compete in multiple F4 championships. However one British F4 technical aspect, crucially, is not the same as in fellow F4 contests. In Britain you have to use a UK-spec Abarth engine, with tuner Neil Brown Engineering's work ensuring engine parity that other F4 championships struggle to match.

ONBOARD SIGNALLING

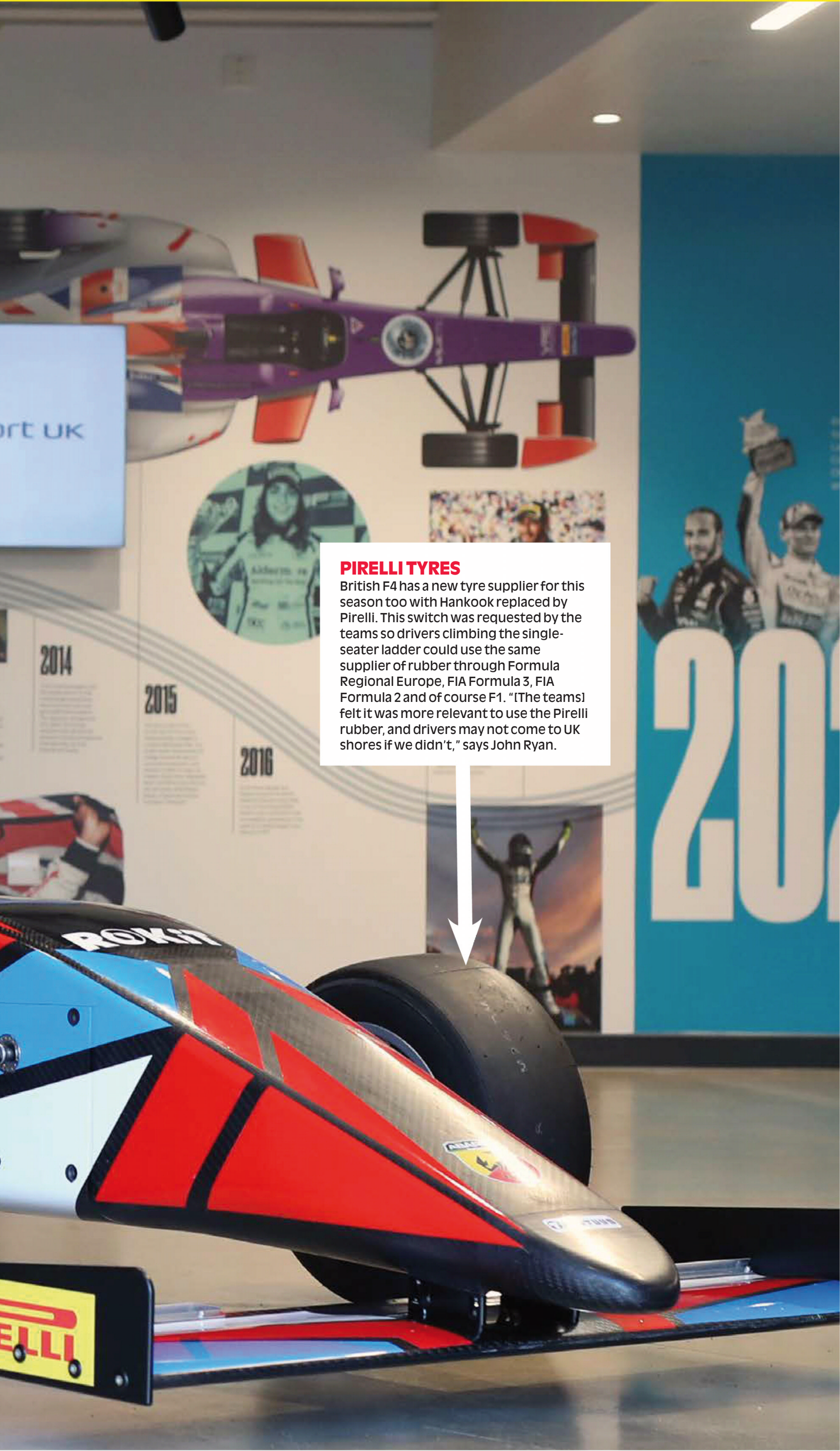
Safety in British F4 gets a boost for 2022 as it adopts the new TOCA/TSL onboard signalling system that displays on the drivers' steering wheel flag signals plus messages from race control such as safety cars, red flags and even car-specific warnings. "This gets away from problems in bad weather conditions etc, and just getting early notice to the drivers before even they come to a corner," adds John Ryan, Motorsport UK's sport, safety and technical director.

TATUUS CHASSIS

The FIA's second-generation F4 chassis makes its debut this season, and the British F4 version – manufactured by Tatuus rather than predecessor Mygale – that launched late last year turned heads. "It does look like a mini Formula 1 car," says Motorsport UK CEO Hugh Chambers. "The Gen1 car it never looked that resolved to me as a design, whereas this looks really resolved. It looks like a great racing car." And for the first time the chassis features the added protection of an F1-style halo, making British F4 the first in the UK at that level to use it. The car also has strengthened side anti-intrusion panels, and British F4's crash test demands exceed even F1's.



TO WATCH



PIRELLI TYRES

British F4 has a new tyre supplier for this season too with Hankook replaced by Pirelli. This switch was requested by the teams so drivers climbing the single-seater ladder could use the same supplier of rubber through Formula Regional Europe, FIA Formula 3, FIA Formula 2 and of course F1. "[The teams] felt it was more relevant to use the Pirelli rubber, and drivers may not come to UK shores if we didn't," says John Ryan.

Photos: Jakob Ebrey



The likes of Oulton Park help youngsters sharpen their skills

UK circuit challenge

We know all about the wide, smooth modern circuit with vast runoff. UK tracks on British F4's calendar – such as Brands Hatch, Oulton Park and Knockhill – in stark contrast are narrow and bumpy with little get-out room. Perfect for developing a young driver's skills, and preparing them for future challenges such as Monaco or Macau. "[At] Brands Grand Prix circuit on a slightly damp day in September your skill level goes up an awful lot more than if you're at grippy Mugello in August," says Motorsport UK board member Karun Chandhok.

TV exposure

British F4 will continue to get visibility as part of ITV4's all-day Sunday coverage of the mass-audience British Touring Car Championship. Two of British F4's three races during the weekend are shown in full and one is usually live. This also, Chandhok reckons, increases drivers' ability to cope with the increasing pressure and scrutiny as their career progresses: "The fact that they're racing on the touring car package is really important because [as they progress] there's a huge amount of pressure and there's spectators, there's the media, and if they can get used to that at an early age it becomes white noise."

Competitive line-up

Famous junior single-seater outfits Virtuosi Racing, Hitech GP and Chris Dittmann Racing join the British F4 party for 2022, bolstering an already strong incumbent line-up including Carlin, reigning drivers' and teams' champion JHR Developments, plus other frontrunners Fortec and Argenti. And this is not just important in of itself. "You can't pick any one team and say it's better or worse than the others," explains Motorsport UK CEO Hugh Chambers, "and that's a mouth-watering prospect for youngsters coming in because in some championships around the world there is one or two teams you have to be with or you're not going to win."



McLaren Formula 1 star Lando Norris is a British F4 champion

F1 connections

Seven out of 10 Formula 1 teams are UK-based and British F4's new promoter Motorsport UK, as the country's governing body, has a close ongoing relationship with them. It also has links with plenty of sportscar and GT teams plus driver management. Motorsport UK CEO Hugh Chambers explains: "As a governing body we can open those doors; because we're not a commercial promoter we are able to have those conversations impartially." This year's champion also gets to go behind the scenes with McLaren at a grand prix.

Following in the footsteps

British F4 alumni include Lando Norris, reigning FIA Formula 2 champion Oscar Piastri and IndyCar star Colton Herta. And from this season British Formula 4 driver development will be boosted with support from the Motorsport UK Academy available to every driver. The championship is also strengthening its links with karting and esports, the latter including Bob Fernley's and ROKiT's Racing Star initiative. "You want to create the next Landos, the next Georges [Russell], the next Lewis [Hamilton]," Karun Chandhok confirms.

Superlicence points

British F4 helps drivers directly on their way to the top; now it's the only UK single-seater category offering FIA F1 superlicence points. British F4's champion gets 12 of them, and points are awarded down to seventh place in the standings. "It goes a long way," says John Ryan, Motorsport UK's sport, safety and technical director. "We've seen problems in recent years when drivers have tried to get their superlicence to do F1 testing and even F1 racing, there's been a shortfall and if they'd collected those points at the early stage it may have helped them."

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FEATURE



116 TROPHY: MORE RACING FOR LESS

*The one-make low-cost endurance series is providing a unique package to more and more drivers, as **Graham Keilloh** finds out*

116Trophy has been going from strength to strength

Over the past three years there has been a growing presence at 750 Motor Club meetings. The 116 Trophy, a low-cost one-make endurance series for the BMW 116i.

"I'm always dubious as to putting your feet up and thinking 'oh yeah this is success now'," 116Trophy coordinator Mark Bate tells Motorsport News, "but I don't think there is any denying that it is doing really well."

"We don't do a lot of advertising, it's more word of mouth and friends of friends and then they decide to come and do it. It's just been a very very small building series that's built at a progressive rate."

Indeed. In 116 Trophy's debut 2019, initially sharing its grid with Roadsports, its turnouts were around 10-12. In Covid-disrupted 2020

numbers burgeoned to 25-30 while last season they grew further.

Bate, with two decades in the BMW world, is a familiar face as he designed the Compact Cup. With 116 Trophy he returned to motorsport after a break, and again it was all about the BMW.

"It's [the 116] very much a car that is designed for exactly for what we use it for," Bate says. "It's very much an endurance car, very very small engine with a very big fuel tank, and the idea for BMW was to build a very small hatchback that was ultimately BMW quality and BMW reliability."

"We spotted that years ago. Originally we wanted to use it for rallying because it fits in the 1.6 class, and it just kept knocking on the door this little car how brilliant it was and how it was very different from all the other BMWs. Then we decided that it would be good as an endurance car and that's what started the series."

Bate quickly received driver interest. "Because of me having the connections, friends, then it was quite an easy sell," he adds, "[attracting] friends that had raced before and people from the Compact Cup that had stopped racing."

So what does 116 Trophy offer? Bate has an immediate answer. "I make sure that everything about the series has to be cost-effective."

"So we have got very probably the cheapest tyres, they can last for a full season, suspension's probably the cheapest suspension that you get on any of the endurance race cars, the rollcage is the cheapest..."

"That's where the drivers see the biggest benefit and when it comes to the costing out then I don't think we can be beaten. And it makes a big difference to people that when the cars have finished the race they don't need new brakes, they don't need new tyres. That's our USP, the cost of the car over the season

is very very little compared with what people are used to."

"When I raced I knew that the series coordinators were putting money on the parts [in a deal] and they were making them mandatory and didn't like that. It really bothered me. So I've made damn sure that that was something we were not going to do."

A donor car can be bought from £1000, and the mandatory parts total under £3000. Running and maintaining them from then on is a simple and low-cost task – something you can do on your own or with a single helper.

"As long as you've got a good straight donor car any team can put the right system on for you, and you should be there or thereabouts pretty quickly," Lewis Tindall, who joined the series after two decades away from competition since karting, tells MN.

"Just do it. You can go and hire the car from someone, [such as] JMC or

Forty40 Racing, but if you've got the knowledge you can build it yourself, if not someone can build it for you. But you can definitely run it yourself for the year, they're really easy to look after."

Frontrunning driver Sam Yates concurs to MN: "We've found [in testing] that a lot of the cars are within half a second to three-quarters of a second of each other. You can build one really cheaply, and be just as quick as the others."

And the low cost is only half of 116 Trophy's equation. The format of a 90-minute race plus 25-minute qualifying session gives plenty of track time within a single day. And for Louis Woodward, who entered 116 Trophy as a racing freshman, this equation was crucial. "Minute per pound on track it was good value," he tells MN, "and I quite liked the fact that they were longer races; it was more how I saw racing."

Yates adds: "For the amount of time



The series has routinely attracted large entries over last two years

**"I make
sure
everything
is cost-
effective"**

Mark Bate



Mark Bate (l) designed the series



Tindall: back racing after 20 years

FEATURE

Photos: RWillsmore Photography



Pitstops are part of the action in 116 Trophy



Outfits such as JMC can hire out a car to racers

you get on track, I'm not sure of anything that's beating it. It's so cost-effective."

The races have two mandatory pitstops, but no refuelling as the halts reflect that competitors can enter one, two or three-driver line-ups. Bate explains: "When you split the cost of driving three ways and transporting the car and the fuel and everything it makes a huge difference."

"If you start off with an ethos and if you can keep doing and it works... the series has grown every year, no-one's ever pulled me in and said you're making a load of money or we're not happy with the pricing."

Then there's the 116 car, which also is a star. Don't let its relatively low power fool you. "The cars are brilliant," Tindall explains. "They're easy to set up and easy to drive, but to get the maximum out of them you've really got put them on the edge."

"They're very nimble, it doesn't feel like a road car"

Jon Cooke

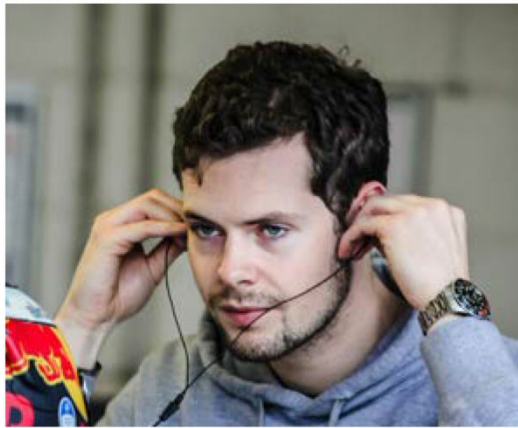
"It helps with the consistency [of your driving]. You really notice if you analyse data after a race if you're not consistent, it just costs you so much time."

JMC Autosport boss Jon Cooke, who hires out cars with colleague John Turner, adds to MN: "With a lower engine power, you can't scrub off too much speed. [You've got to] keep the speed up round the corners. Mr Yates is very good at that."

"It's very nimble round the corners. It's loud. You feel like you're not in a road car, you are actually in a fully built race car."

Yates adds: "They're just a lot of fun to drive, very forgiving, really good for a beginner."

Appropriately therefore 116 Trophy has attracted the full range of drivers, from those fresh from their ARDS test to experienced racers. It has even attracted high-profile names, including



Harrison Newey has tried series

Harrison Newey and Martin Donnelly.

"We do get some very very experienced drivers," Bate says, "and they're quite miffed when they get out because I think they think they're going to show the other guys how it's done, but they've got more experience in that car."

"We've had some cracking drivers, and in the series we have got some really really good drivers, and they're not big names or anything. Lewis Tindall, he's a very very good driver."

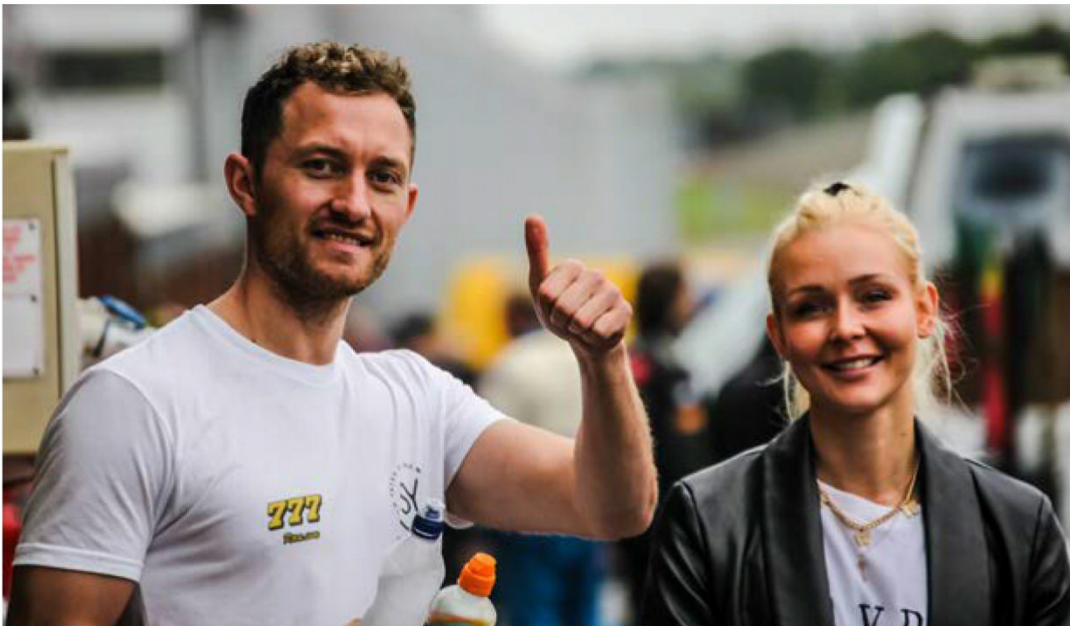
Ensuring the cars remain close on lap time is another passion of Bate's, and he achieves it through widespread use of mandatory parts. Essentially only the car's geometry and tyre pressures can be changed, and this ensures close racing wherein drivers make the difference.

"It's very very close," Bate confirms. "We do get lots of different people on the podium, and we have team of the day [and] driver of the day." There are also success penalties for podium finishers from the previous race. "I'd say pretty much anyone can be in the frontrunning if you can keep out of trouble," adds Cooke.

The standard of the racing is good too. "It's quality," Tindall says, "there's hardly any incidents. I've only got one scrape in the car for the whole year of racing, it's almost nothing."

The 116 Trophy ethos includes that it is a relaxed and friendly contest. That it's a series, not a points-paying championship, chimes with this. And the ethos even extends to who wins the 116 Trophy itself.

"[It] is a silver trophy that we give



Sam Yates hails the series' bang for buck and the equality of its cars

Woodward demonstrates do-it-yourself racing

Accessibility is key to 116 Trophy's offering. And the point is demonstrated by Louis Woodward who, with only trackdays and birthday-present experience days behind him, entered the contest in 2020. And did it with a car built at home.

"I've always had a few older classic-type cars, I used to collect vintage tractors and stuff like that so I've always been mechanically minded," he tells MN. "So I wanted to have a go at doing it myself and just followed the regs and asked [coordinator] Mark Bate for help and just a few people like that along the way."

"When I did my ARDS test I met a group of other people there, saw what they were doing. I went to Autosport Show and saw a car there and got some inspiration and just how they put the car together, and really researched and found my way along



Woodward built car at home

with it. And it's turned out to be quite a successful car."

Woodward qualified ninth and finished seventh in a 28-car turnout on his 116 Trophy debut. "I was thinking coming 15th or something would have been a successful day."

"I don't have any team support, it's myself and my girlfriend. I have spent a lot of time at home just making sure everything is as good as it can be within the regs."



The standard of the drivers and racing in 116 Trophy is strong

away every year and that's for people that have brought the most to the series," Bate outlines, "whether they've helped people out in the pits or [whatever]. It's nothing to do with what they've done on the track, it's not about how many races you've won or anything."

All-in therefore competitors struggle to cite another category that provides what 116 Trophy does. "I guess the nearest thing to it is the [Enduro] Ka championship or Club Enduro," Tindall muses. "Club Enduro's a lot more money, the Ka is front-wheel drive, so I guess it's just unique really. It's the only one-make rear-wheel-drive endurance racing I can think of."

And the intention is for 116 Trophy to keep doing what it's doing. "The future is we just keep building and we just keep growing and growing and growing and we're organic," Bate concludes. "Whether we end up filling the grids to the point where they need extra races or we need to do the bigger tracks then we're ready for that. We've not got crazy high hopes for it, we're just going to keep going as we are and keep enjoying it." ■

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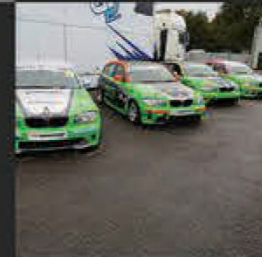
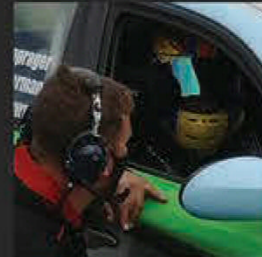
116
trophy

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FEATURE

BEHIND THE WHEEL OF A MODERN-DAY RALLYCROSS CLASSIC

Hal Ridge *tries out the ultimate iteration of an RX3 machine, the Volland Racing Audi A1*



Our man realised his Super 1600 dreams with Audi outing



Components are mounted low to keep centre of gravity optimum

The champagne on the Volland Racing team's awning floor has barely had time to dry as, having ascended the winding mountain road from the Portuguese town of Chaves, I arrived at the Montalegre rallycross circuit for a special track test.

Not unusually when arriving for tests on weekdays, the Montalegre paddock was mostly empty. Just 14 hours earlier, it had been a hive of activity as teams in the World and European Rallycross Championships loaded up to hit the road for home following an intensive back-to-back week of events.

While the headline-makers in the headline World RX category had left Portugal with the title still to be decided, the Euro RX RX3 (Super 1600) teams have departed following the conclusion of the front-wheel-drive season. One RX3 squad remained however, and I was set to realise a long-standing aspiration.

German outfit Volland Racing is the dominant force of RX3 in the modern era. Its Audi A1s stand at the top of the class in a field where the margins are tiny, and the squad had remained at the Montalegre circuit to allow me the opportunity to sample its machinery.

And it wasn't just in any car either, but the A1 owned and driven by Swiss-based Russian Yury Belevskiy who, just the previous day, had secured the RX3 crown in emphatic style by winning his fourth round from five starts.

In recent years I've had some amazing opportunities to drive – and in some cases race – several incredible rallycross cars including several works-built Supercars.

Just over a decade ago I was still in the throes of trying to keep my own driving career alive, driving my own self-built Renault Clio in Super 1600 (created with a lot of help from a lot of friends I might add). There were few similarities between my car and those of the frontrunners. Had we had the budget things may have been different, but we didn't and that's how it is. It of course always left me with a lingering "what if" feeling about getting a go in a top-level car. It was an itch that needed scratching, just to see how much difference it would really make.

RX3, as it is today, has been a stepping stone to success for a range of incredibly talented drivers: World RX race-winners and podium-finishers like Andreas Bakkerud, Reinis Nitiss, Timur Timerzyanov, Kevin Eriksson, Joni Wiman and Janis Baumanis to name but a few. The category's technical regulations are an evolution of the Super 1600 rally rules, and, when the class was first introduced to Euro RX in 2003 [then called Division 1A] just like when Group B migrated from rally to rallycross when Group A became the premier rally category after 1986, several Super 1600 machines transcended into rallycross from rally, the Junior World Rally Championship having adopted the Super 1600 concept in 2001.

But while the first top Super 1600 rallycross cars might have been works-built rally machines with the spare wheel, co-drivers' seat and headlights removed, today's RX3 cars are an even further development. The works rally squads such as Renault, Peugeot, Citroen and Suzuki ended their S1600 programmes in 2010 and Volland's Audi A1 is almost

certainly the fastest and most capable Super 1600 car of all time.

First introduced to replace the German team's title-winning Skoda Fabias part-way through 2018, the brief was simple: to improve the concept in every area and not introduce it to competition until it was certifiably faster than its predecessor.

That attention to detail is obvious, from the carbonfibre rear wing (that was originally created by Audi Sport for the EKS World RX team's Supercars to use for low drag in Canada), to the moment you look in the door, with everything mounted as low as possible to improve the centre of gravity and weight distribution.

But while team boss Rolf Volland claims, and there's no reason to disbelieve him, that the car is an improvement in "literally thousands of areas" over its predecessor, for me the real gains are at each corner, with the evolution of suspension technology and perhaps more importantly still, under the bonnet.

While Super 1600 machines are held close to petrol heads' hearts worldwide for their screaming engine note, that high-revving performance, in the past at least, came with a pitfall in terms of driveability – the necessity to keep the engine revving and 'on cam' in order to produce the required power.

But today, much like the development of turbocharged engine performance meaning the operating window of being on boost in the rev range isn't as limited as it was in the past, not only have the peak figures of Super 1600 machines increased but the tractability of the engine performance through the rev range has evolved enormously.

Such is the nature of top-class cars, the details are vague, but peak power

Photos: Ricardo Moura (Montalegre)



The tractable power delivery inspired Ridge



Balancing the throttle and brakes is key to unlocking Audi's speed



The Volland Racing Audi has been the pick of the RX3 brigade



Ridge gets brave with the Montalegre kerbs

from the Audi is around 240bhp with a 9500rpm maximum.

Fortunately, Belevskiy is on the tall side like I am, so with the belts adjusted I fit into his driving position. By using the push-button keypad mounted next to the seat on the exhaust tunnel, I press the start button and the engine jumps into life. I grin at the idle note of the 1600cc motor, the kind of fast, lumpy idle only emitted by a high-revving naturally aspirated machine.

Once the engine is up to temperature, I depressed the clutch and pulled the sequential gear level towards me with a satisfying clunk as first gear is engaged and I trundle down to the grid area. The circuit's been reprepared early in the morning following the abuse of a World RX weekend, the Montalegre track preparation team renowned as some of the best in the business. Overnight rain means traction on both the Tarmac and the sandy loose-surface sections will be at a premium, so we opt to run worn wet tyres, with more grooves than the dry option from Cooper's range of single-specification tyres in the series. In race conditions it would be dry tyres but we are erring on the side of caution rather than seeking ultimate lap time.

With an audible chatter from the transmission as I pull away to begin the first of my two runs, down the long, downhill straight I'm quickly through the revs and into fifth gear, very ginger at the wheel of this hugely expensive, title-winning machine in the first instance.

Not resting on the laurels of their success, team boss Volland and Belevskiy have both left Portugal by the time I drive. They are preparing for a national race the following weekend where Belevskiy is to

race an Audi Supercar, already on the next step of his career, but they had left me with words of advice. While Belevskiy was quite rightly more concerned getting his pride and joy back in one piece (also my primary objective), Volland was keen to make me aware that because the squad has worked so hard to reduce weight in the back of the car, the rear can be very loose when the track is damp, the tyres are cold, or a horrible combination of the two.

I'm cautious on the brakes for the first time of asking into Turn 1 with that in mind, and I stay off the famous kerbs back up the hill on Tarmac heading towards the loose section. Here though, as the track crests through the left-hander of Turn 4 and drops into the right-hander of Turn 5, it's impossible not to use the kerbs, as they are such a critical part of this amazing circuit.

Over the smooth loose the car moves around more than I expected but, through the very long right-hander that leads from Turn 7 into the much tighter Turn 8, some way-too-aggressive steering inputs keep me on the straight and narrow – just.

The key to being fast in these cars is



Our man was thrilled with the A1

having smooth, progressive inputs. Mental note taken.

Perhaps I momentarily lapse into four-wheel-drive mode or maybe just because there's something irresistibly cool about a vertical hydraulic handbrake but, for some reason or another, having entered Turn 8 in third gear, knocking the gear lever forward to select second and climb the hill, I give the handbrake a tug at the apex.

The back wheels lock and the rear of the car rotates to the left. It might look and feel cool, but it certainly isn't fast, and once I'm more on top of the car over the next nine laps across the two runs, I don't touch the handbrake again.

I treat the Armco-barrier lined final chicane on lap one cautiously (I've seen too many talented drivers bury their car in the wall here) and I'm back onto the straight. With my right foot flat on the floor, I'm quickly up to sixth gear, using the full-throttle flat-shift system to change up the gearbox, each time just ahead of the shift lights.

I'm into top gear long before the end of the straight before this time getting more heavily on the brakes with my left foot,

"It is the best rallycross chassis I've driven"

Hal Ridge

changing down the gearbox with my right hand. Without the tyres fully up to temperature, I'm careful to get all of the braking done in a straight line, not turning the wheel before I'm done with the braking phase to ensure the rear doesn't try to overtake the front of the car under deceleration.

Revving the engine harder up through the gears on the second tour, the more you push this car the more it comes to you, and on the loose section I'm starting to use more positive steering inputs, together with modulation of the throttle and a degree of left-foot braking to keep the front wheels spinning, the revs up and the car heading in the correct direction. It's almost gliding underneath me.

With the aforementioned developments in the design and build of the engine's physical architecture and the versatility of the management system, the engine is amazingly tractable. Contrary to driving my own car, where being in the right gear the correct time was critical or you'd fall outside the power band like a dropping stone, in the Audi, with the engine and perfectly refined gear ratios working in harmony, you can get away with not being in the correct gear all the time.

Of course there's always an optimum, and while this grace means that those less capable than the top-flight drivers can operate the cars successfully, more importantly it means that it's possible to stay in a gear through a medium speed corner for example, when previously you would almost certainly have needed to shift down, both upsetting the balance of the chassis and costing time.

That's evident through both Turn 1 and the long Turn 8, where third gear I find, when the line is perfected, can be used

throughout both. I take the joker on one of my laps just to have experienced it, taking a chunk of kerb on the left-hand exit, the chassis barely moving, the dampers absorbing the load incredibly well.

The Montalegre circuit is renowned for its huge kerbs, and the Audi deals with them all admirably. Trying much harder throughout my second run, although less so through the final chicane it has to be said, I'm starting to get the rear rotated more on corner entry, especially into the uphill left-hand Turn 6 the first of the loose surface corners. Staying in the throttle with a small amount of opposite lock corrects the direction as the Audi rises over the huge kerb.

I don't look at the lap times, partially because I know I lost a lot through the final corners in a bid to return Belevskiy's car in the condition he left it and I also left a lot of time out on track elsewhere too, but the pace felt good and that it wouldn't be difficult to find more. Having debriefed with Volland on the phone, I message a friend and describe the A1 as the best chassis I have ever driven. That's a big call, but I think I can stand by that.

The A1 just feels so positive and predictable on track, both on the Tarmac and the loose. I felt I could do what I wanted with it with relative ease, and it didn't catch me out once.

Opportunities to drive European Championship title-winning cars on the same circuit where the biggest prize was won just the day before are few and far between, and what better machine to do it in? The test fulfilled my desire to drive a top RX3 car and now I can confirm that while the top drivers in the class are undeniably special, their cars are too. ■

REPORTS

MALLORY PARK: 750MC BY IAN SOWMAN

DECEMBER 26, 2021

Photos: Steve Jones, Martin Walsh, Gary Craig

CHRISTMAS COMES
BIRLEY FOR ROCKET ROD*Ford Escort man gobbles up Plum Pudding glory*

RACE WINNERS

Saloons

Races 1 & 2: Rod Birley (Ford Escort WRC)

Sports Cars

Race 1: Jon Paul-Ivey (Radical PR6);
Race 2: Ash Hicklin (Radical SR3)

Birley (ahead), dominated and took two triumphs

Club racing stalwart Rod Birley ended 2021 with 702 career victories after adding another at the annual Plum Pudding races at Mallory Park, organised for the first time by the 750 Motor Club.

On a damp and murky Boxing Day, Birley dominated the Saloon Car contests in his Ford Escort WRC but much of the entertainment was provided by Andy Thompson's ultimately fruitless pursuits of the prolific winner. Birley assumed the lead of the first race but Thompson – aboard his Seat Toledo – had more to do from row five of the grid, passing Sam McKee's BMW 328 for second place at Lake Esses on the second lap. Birley's lead was already eight seconds by then, but Thompson set about eating into it, to the extent it was only 1.3s by the end of the eighth lap. Then Thompson called off the charge. "The exhaust started blowing about halfway through," he said. "Then some oil went down, so I bailed out."

Birley was able to pull away again, with Thompson's race ending ignominiously when he went off on the final lap, handing the runner-up spot to Wayne Ward's Subaru Impreza. Giles Kirk, in a Renault Clio 182, came out on top of McKee after an entertaining duel over what became the final podium spot.

The reversed grid for the second race proved no trouble for Birley, who took the

lead at the start of the second lap from Kirk. Having slithered into the tyres at Gerard's Bend in the first race, Hot Hatch frontrunner Ryan Polley had a stronger start to the second race but lost out to Thompson at Shaw's Corner for third place on the second lap, with Kirk subsequently losing out at Lake Esses on lap four. Ward was also making good progress, and he and Thompson swapped places a couple of times, catching Birley as they went.

Thompson asserted himself over Ward and tried to hunt down the leader, but he pushed too hard when the gap was down to around two seconds and he slid off at Gerard's. Ward was second and, with Kirk later disqualified for a yellow flag infringement, Mick Storey third in his Renault Clio 172.

The Sports Car races produced two different winners. Jon-Paul Ivey came out at the head of the first race, blowing the cobwebs off his Radical PR6 after a two-year absence. Ash Hicklin narrowed the gap to Ivey in his Radical SR3 in the late stages, with the leader delayed by the Lotus Exige clone of Paul Woolfitt.

Hicklin led for much of the second race, including when it mattered, but Ivey got ahead by pouncing when the leaders went either side of a slower car on Stebbe Straight, only to make a mistake three laps later and lose out again.



Thompson ended race one with an off-track adventure in his Seat

BOGGERAGH RALLYSPRINT: BY MARTIN WALSH

DECEMBER 29, 2021

GUEST WINS IN BOGGERAGH

The festive Boggeragh Rallysprint, run over a 5.6-mile gravel road around a windfarm in north Cork, delivered a dramatic maiden victory for David Guest in his Ford Fiesta R5.

Early leader and fellow Cork driver Gerard Lucey (Mitsubishi Lancer E9) was breezing to victory until his car lost power on the final run and dropped to third, 4.2 seconds adrift of winner Guest and 1.4s behind the ex-Marcus Gronholm Ford Focus WRC of Waterford's Ray Breen.

With a lead of seven seconds after the penultimate run, Lucey appeared to have

done enough, however, the power loss on his final trip scuppered his dream of a career-first victory. Guest spun on the final corner and had to reverse to get back on track, and had done enough to secure the spoils.

Breen, father of M-Sport WRC star Craig, enjoyed his trip and welcomed similar events of this nature. Ford Escort Mk2 ace Frank Kelly claimed the two-wheel-drive category and seventh overall, his nemesis Marty McCormack losing time with a faulty coil.

Jack Brennan (Skoda Citigo) topped the J1000 category.

Result

Boggeragh Rallysprint

Organiser: Cork Motor Club **When:** December 29, 2021 **Where:** Nad, Co. Cork **Starters:** 69
1 David Guest/Liam Moynihan (Ford Fiesta R5) 14m51.6s; 2 Ray Breen/Andy Hayes (Ford Focus WRC) +2.8s; 3 Ger Lucey/JJ Cremin (Mitsubishi Lancer E9) +4.2s; 4 Alan Shinnors/Greg Shinnors (Mitsubishi Lancer E9) +28.6s; 5 PJO Connor/Danny Greaney Mitsubishi Lancer E9) +40.0s; 6 Brendan Stone/JP Ruth (Subaru Impreza) +48.0s; 7 Frank Kelly/Lauren Kelly (Ford Escort Mk2) +52.1s; 8 Mike O'Connor Snr/Greg Shinnors (Mitsubishi Lancer E4) +1m02.7s; 9 Steven Corey/Peter McCullagh Jr (Ford Escort Mk2) +1m11.5s; 10 Mark Murphy/Shawnagh Murphy (Subaru Impreza) +1m31.9s.



Even a late spin could not derail David Guest's charge to glory

TURKEY RALLY RUN: BY JASON CRAIG

DECEMBER 29, 2021

HENRY BAGS TURKEY RUN VICTORY IN NEW MOUNT

Desi Henry raced to top spot at the festive Turkey Run Rally by 7.4 seconds at the controls of his new Ford Fiesta Rally2.

The win was Henry's second of the 2021 season to be taken at the former Shackleton airbase in Ballykelly after his August triumph in the Dog Leap Stages Rally. Henry's performance came at the wheel of a Rally2 version of the M-Sport-developed Ford Fiesta that had been bought from Cathan McCourt just days prior to the rally.

Leading from start to finish, Henry set two fastest times on the five-stage event. "I thought that we would have really struggled at Shackleton against the

World Rally Cars and Derek McGarrity's two-litre Skoda Fabia R5+, because we were down on power against them," Henry said.

"That was true when the conditions improved and the stages began to dry up – it really started to hurt us – but thankfully things turned slippery again and that kept us in contention for the win."

The result denied Aaron McLaughlin the chance to defend his Turkey Run crown despite entering a Ford Fiesta World Rally Car. The Donegal man was involved in a tit-for-tat battle with McGarrity throughout the opening three special stages before the latter hit trouble.

On the fourth test, McGarrity's Fabia developed a mechanical problem which dropped him from second place to sixth and when he eventually made his way back to service, he elected to call it a day.

Reigning Irish Forestry champion McCourt profited from McGarrity's demise as he moved up to third, 11 seconds to the good over Joseph McGonigle. Gareth Sayers made it a Blue Oval top five lock-out.

Result

Organiser: Maiden City Motor Club **When:** December 29, 2021 **Where:** Shackleton, Ballykelly **Starters:** 78
1 Desi Henry/John Rowan (Ford Fiesta Rally2) 37m21.4s; 2 Aaron McLaughlin/Darren Curran (Ford

Fiesta WRC) +7.4s; 3 Cathan McCourt/Sean O'Donnell (Ford Fiesta Rally2) +36.2s; 4 Joseph McGonigle/John McCay (Ford Fiesta Rally2) +47.5s; 5 Gareth Sayers/Gareth Gilchrist (Ford Fiesta R5) +1m14.4s; 6 Niall Henry/Barry McErlean (Ford Fiesta R5) +1m29.7s; 7 Anthony Cairns/Mark Preston (Subaru Impreza) +2m42.0s; 8 Michael McCollum/Michael Pearson (Ford Fiesta Rally2) +2m52.7s; 9 Páidí Hamill/Martin Harte (Ford Fiesta R5) +3m07.3s; 10 Kevin Wilson/Martin Farren (Ford Fiesta R5) +3m17.6s. **Class winners:** Conor McCourt/Caolan McKenna (Ford Escort Mk2); Ronnie McConnell/Rachel McConnell (Honda Civic); Mark Moore/Jonathan Dinsmore (Nissan Micra); Lee McLaughlin/Aaron McCarron (Honda Civic); Colum Browne/Michael Browne (Ford Escort Mk3); John Bradley/Ryan Crozier (Ford Escort Mk2); Gareth Irwin/Conor Curley (Ford Escort Mk2); Michael McCrossan/David Dennison (Mitsubishi Lancer E10); Cairns/Preston; Hamill/Harte; Henry/Rowan.



Henry loved maiden Rally2 run

WHAT'S ON

YOUTUBE



AJ Foyt is the definition of the word 'legend' in racing

On Sunday there is a very special motorsport birthday to celebrate, as the legendary AJ Foyt hits a fine 87 years of age. And just in case you're uninitiated about Foyt's stardom, let's lay out some of his scarcely believable statistics. An unbeaten total of four Indianapolis 500 wins, plus seven Indycar championships and 67 Indycar race victories. On top of these you can add triumphs in the Daytona 500, Le Mans 24 Hours, Daytona 24 Hours and Sebring 12 Hours. Foyt's also totalled 20 or more victories

each in Indycars, stock cars, sprint cars and in midgets. But of course, rather than hearing from us, or just hearing the dry numbers, it's all best conveyed by seeing and hearing directly from the great man. And thankfully YouTube serves us well here, with plenty of footage from Foyt in and out of the car. For starters there is 13 minutes of him reflecting on his racing career from the very beginning, talking to a TV station from his birthplace of Houston, Texas. This is at: youtube.com/watch?v=athhcB6kVCs. In this we

find out that the extraordinary man has even twice survived attacks by killer bees. While to get some fill of Foyt on track you can watch 80 minutes of his final Indy 500 victory, that in 1977, with it becoming the first to win the legendary race four times. That's at: youtube.com/watch?v=xNXJG06Bi-4. While if you want something specific about Foyt's 1967 Le Mans triumph he talks about that here: youtube.com/watch?v=y7LmkS6NtYA.

Graham Keillor

TV GUIDE

Motorsport, as we know, rarely rests and with 2022 barely underway the year's Dakar Rally is already tearing to its conclusion. You can follow the contest on Eurosport 1, with the best of today's penultimate Stage 11 on at 2230hrs-2330hrs today and the concluding Stage 12 on at the same time tomorrow. You also each day can watch the best of the previous day's Dakar stage, with an hour's highlights of yesterday's Stage 10 shown today starting at 0400hrs, 0930hrs and 1630hrs, while today's Stage 11 best is also

shown tomorrow starting at 0400hrs. The highlights of the finale Stage 12 are also shown several times on Saturday. And on Tuesday, now over on Eurosport 2, there's an hour's wrap of the whole Dakar Rally at 1930hrs-2030hrs. BT Sport 1 today meanwhile offers something a little different with the best of last November's Killarney Historic Rally, shown at 1330hrs-1430hrs. While for something really different, early on Saturday on Sky Arts at 0530hrs-0600hrs you can watch a Jaguar C-Type driven at Le Mans and a 1968 Ferrari

valued at €23 million go under the hammer at the Grand Prix de Monaco Historique. Premier Sports 2 also has action for early risers, starting with Northampton BRISCA F1 racing tomorrow at 0700hrs-0800hrs. Then on Sunday at 0600hrs-0800hrs it has a review of the latest Australian Supercars season. Sky Sports F1 meanwhile each day has a retread of 2021's Formula 1 weekends, including practice and qualifying. Today's offering is the Azerbaijan round from Baku.

Graham Keillor



There is plenty of Dakar action to enjoy on the telly

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David Harbey's shot of the Xmas present Mike Stokoe dreamt of



Bob Sketchley's Jaguar photo



Dean Chilvers watched F1 testing



Another from David Harbey

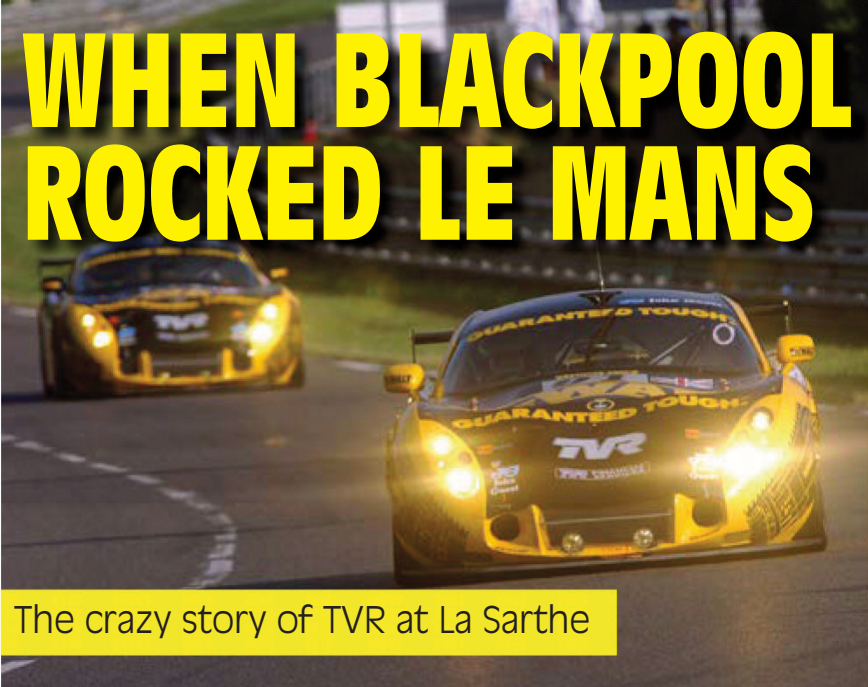


Richard Salisbury from Mallory

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OUT THURSDAY, JANUARY 20



The crazy story of TVR at La Sarthe



Why Lewis and Max were destined for a collision course

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EDITORIAL
Editor: Matt James
Tel: 07884 117139
Email: Matt.James@kelsey.co.uk

Deputy Editor: Graham Keillor
Tel: 07973 829291
Email: Graham.Keillor@kelsey.co.uk

Reporter: Nick Garton
Nick.Garton@kelsey.co.uk

Art Editor: Mike Stokoe
Tel: 07957 282340
Email: mikestokoe@gmail.com

Contributors
Historics Editor: Paul Lawrence
Rallycross Editor: Hal Ridge
Columnist at large: David Addison
Columnist and track tester: Andrew Jordan
Technical Editor: Carl Faux

ADVERTISING
Director: David Lerpiniere
Tel: 01732 445326
Email: david@talkmediasales.co.uk

Sales Director: Russell Bedford
Tel: 01732 445328
Email: russell.bedford@talkmediasales.co.uk

Ad Manager: Natalie Harman
Tel: 01732 446757
Email: natalie.harman@talkmediasales.co.uk

PRODUCTION
Advert Production Manager: Matt Ryan
Tel: 01732 445755
Email: Production@talkmediasales.co.uk

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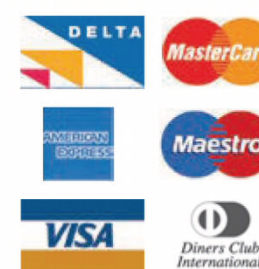


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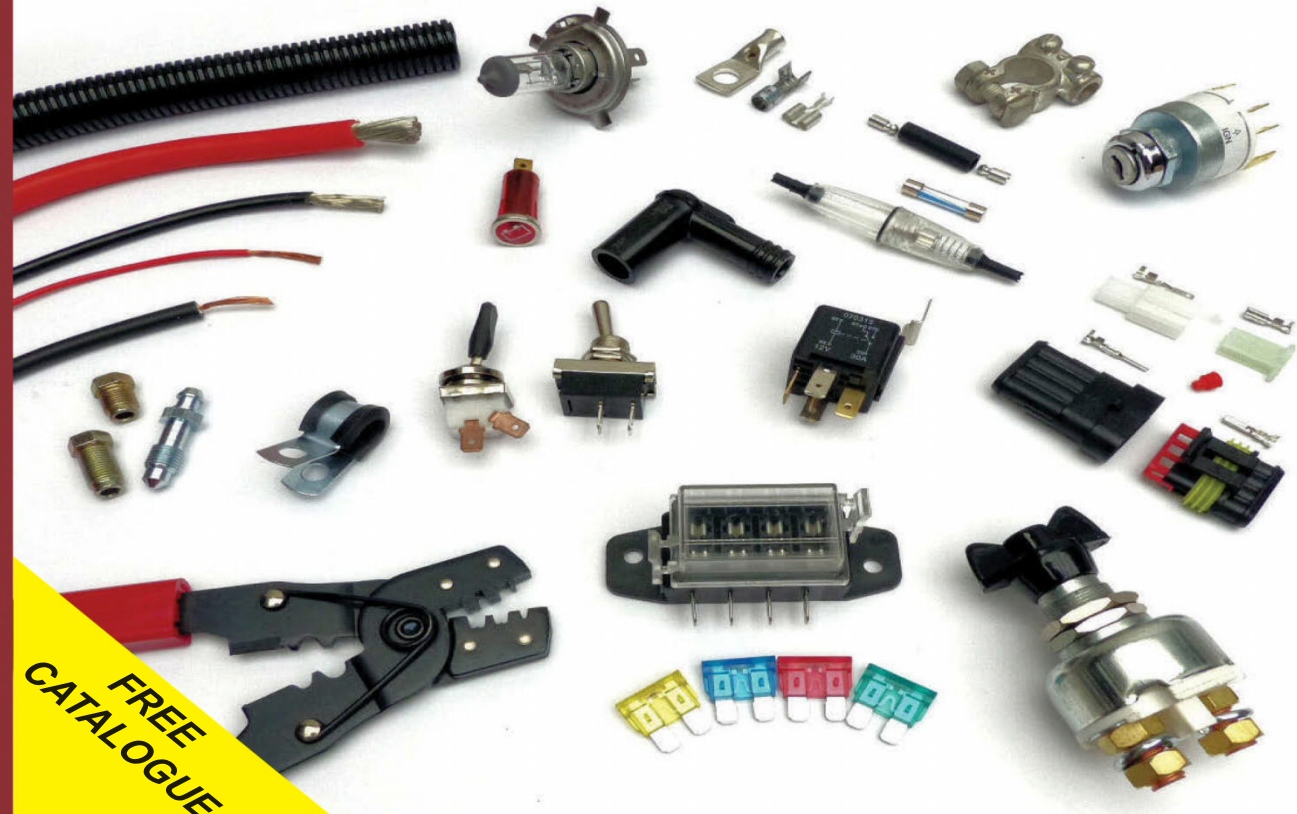
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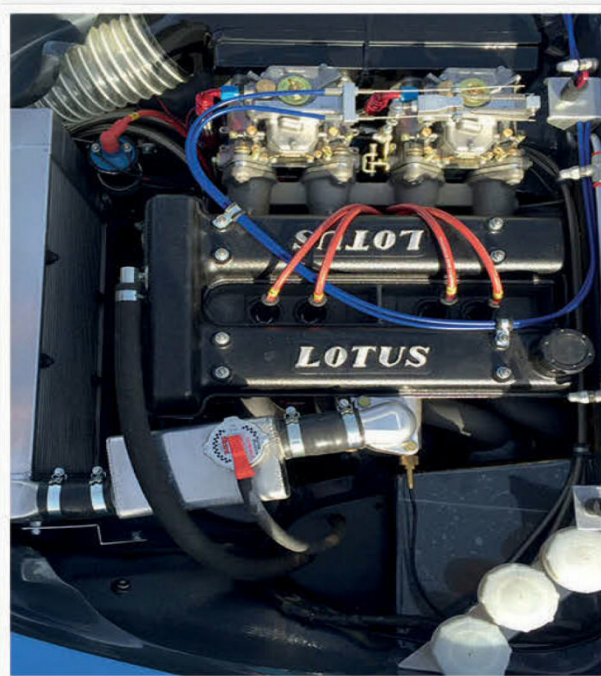
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E: Russell@talkmediasales.co.uk

Natalie Harman

Account Manager

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E: Natalie.harman@talkmediasales.co.uk

Matt Ryan

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